Rape in the Republic, 1609–1725

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Rape in the Republic, 1609–1725

Formulating Dutch Identity

By

Amanda Pipkin

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

In loving memory of my father,
who always encouraged me to write books
and "published" my crayon and construction paper masterpieces.

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PREFACE

When I started this project, I asked for some help locating stories of rape in the special collections of Dutch university libraries. Not surprisingly perhaps, the answer I received was: no, our collections will not help you learn more about rape. It is likely the archivists thought the place to research this topic would be in the municipal archives sifting through legal sources. However, as Sjoerd Faber's study of Amsterdam revealed, there are in fact few instances of rape that made their way into the legal record. He identified only eight charges of rape during the 131 years between 1680 and 1811. Els Kloek found only two cases of rape in Leiden during the 116 years between 1678 and 1794. Widening the search to include sexual assault, Manon van der Heijden found fourteen men accused and sentenced in Rotterdam and Delft during the seventeenth century. Reformed Church disciplinary documents are only slightly more helpful as Herman Roodenburg demonstrated because the council required women to appear before them to explain their out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Still, only nine of these women made accusations of rape during the 122 years between 1578 and 1700. While there remains a great deal more to be said about the incidence of rape cases that came before secular and church courts, this material primarily informs us about the few acts considered egregious enough to merit the very serious charge of rape.

As this book demonstrates, there is a wide array of seventeenth-century Dutch books that feature rape, including the well-known works of Joost van den Vondel and Jacob Cats. Other groups who published stories of rape that are highlighted in this study are patriotic propagandists, Protestant moralists, priests writing for a devout Catholic audience in the United Provinces, and literary women. In finding and interrogating these Dutch sources, I am indebted to the now substantial list of scholars who have articulated theories of rape and who have noted its presence in medieval and early modern literature. These scholars revealed that stories of rape abound in a variety of sources, that rape performs particular functions in society, and that frequently violent sexual acts are deemed too insignificant to be considered rape.

The answer I received about the absence of rape in the university collections is only noteworthy because I believe it is indicative of a contemporary inability to recognize rape both in the past and in the present. Part of the problem is that there were so many other ways people described rape in the past. In the seventeenth-century Dutch sources, what we consider rape fell under other words such as: immorality (*ontucht*), temptation (*tentatie*), assault (*aanranding*), impurity (*onsuyverheydt*), and abduction (*ontschaken*), just to name a few. However, as Susan Scholz and Diane Wolfthal have noted, there are also alarming instances in which modern scholars deny rape where past authors have acknowledged it. Moreover, there is a problematic continuity in the definition of rape that makes us blind to instances of contemporary rape. Like our early modern predecessors, contemporary men and women frequently defined rapists as strangers, outsiders, and criminals. Although we deem the violent attacks of these men reprehensible, our definition inhibits us from recognizing that a woman may also know her rapist, he may not leave visible evidence of physical trauma, and the victim may not tell anyone about the assault. In fact, according to sociologist James Brewer, this type of rape, known as acquaintance rape, accounts for seventy-six percent of all rape cases. This is only one of many possible examples that reveals how our modern conceptions of rape do not fit reality. My hope is that this book will emphasize some of the ways Dutch society condoned rape in the seventeenth century and raise awareness that rape myths and gender inequities survive to the present day.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Dutch have wielded an influence on the global imagination quite out of proportion to their geographic size. Currently the Dutch are famous (or perhaps infamous) for creating a liberal society in which people consume marijuana, visit prostitutes, and practice euthanasia. Late nineteenth-century Americans and twentieth-century Japanese cherished a very different vision of the Dutch in which they were guardians of a purer, simpler past. Americans experienced a "Holland Mania" that found expression in art, architecture, trinkets, and children's books such as the legendary *Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates*, which featured the eight-year old boy who saved his polder village by sticking his finger in the dike. The authors and artists inspired by this passion cast the Dutch as industrious people, decked out in traditional clothing immaculately clean even if mended, carrying milk or tulips, wearing wooden shoes or ice-skates, and smoking pipes full of tobacco.[1] More recently, the Japanese opened a picturesque theme-park near the site of the seventeenth-century Dutch East India trading post. Created to memorialize the trade agreement that made the Dutch the sole westerners allowed in Japan between 1609 and 1639, this village features Dutch-style buildings, canals, tulips, and windmills. This spotless, flower-filled park, like the Hans Brinker illustration below recalls Dutch culture during its maritime heyday of the seventeenth century.

This book sets out to provide a far less idyllic set of images that the men and women living in the Republic during the seventeenth-century used to define what it meant to be Dutch. I am specifically referring to depictions of rape that abound in the literature of the Dutch Golden Age.[2]

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[1] Saskia de Bodt and Jill Bradley, *Children of Holland: The Image of the Netherlands in American Children's Books* (Zwolle: D'Jonge Hond, 2010).

[2] The Dutch Golden Age roughly spans the seventeenth century. More specifically, some historians pinpoint the Twelve Years' Truce in 1609 as its start, note that the economic boom had tapered off by 1670, but observe that the Dutch culture continued to flourish into the eighteenth-century. For a discussion of the use and usefulness of this designation in Dutch history see the introduction of *Women of the Golden Age: An International Debate on Women in Seventeenth-Century Holland, England and Italy*, ed. Els Kloek, Nicole Teeuwen, and Marijke Huisman (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994).

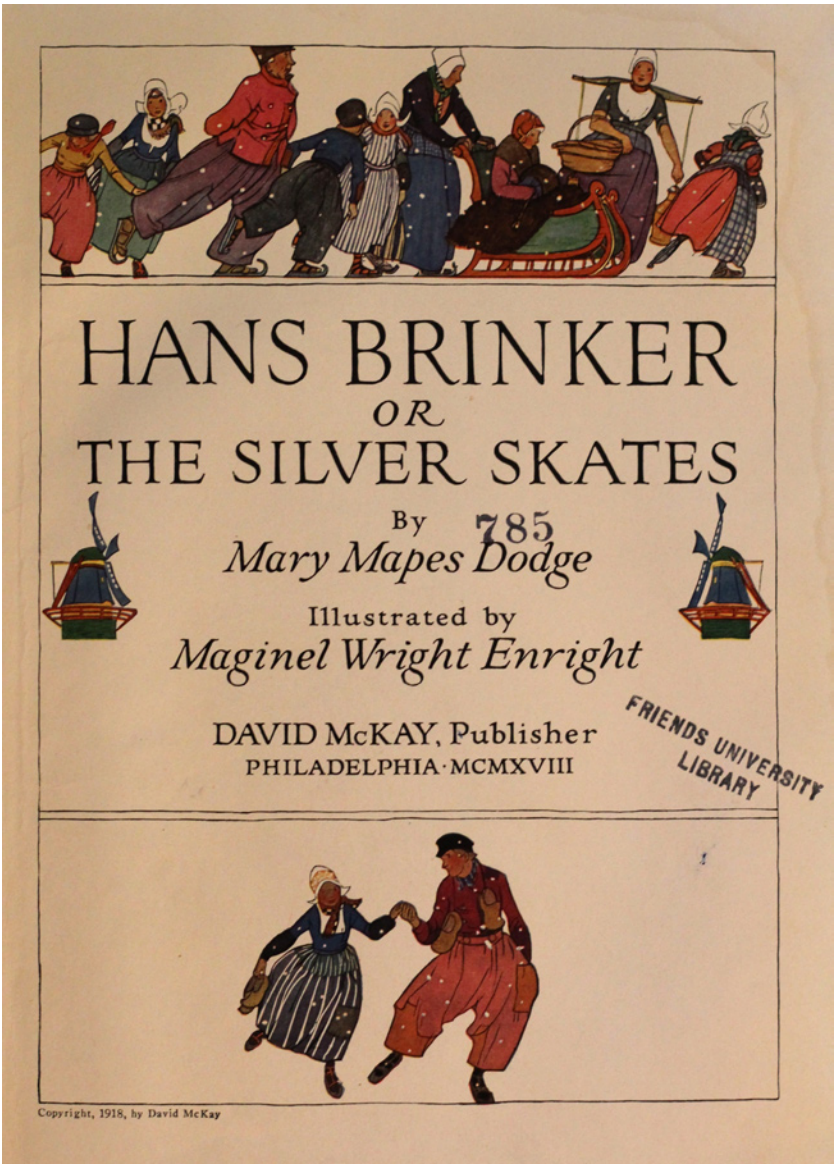

Plate 1. Maginel Wright Enright's titlepage illustration of Mary Mapes Dodge, *Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates* (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1918).

At first glance, these stories are confounding. For instance, how should we interpret the fact that the climactic scene of the most famous Dutch play—the *Gijsbrecht van Amstel* by Joost van den Vondel, which was so well-received that it ran once a season in the Amsterdam Theater from 1638 to 1968—not only depicts the rape and murder of a nun, but also the fact that she is raped while lying on the dead body of her uncle, the bishop? What are we to make of popular Protestant moralist, Jacob Cats' story of a woman who begs a court of law to allow her to marry her rapist? What purpose did Catholic advice to women to kill a man threatening rape serve? These images may fail to jibe with the more common stereotype of the traditional Dutch as prudish, frugal, and meticulous; however, these surprising stories offer tremendous historical insight into the seventeenth-century Dutch society and culture that produced them. These stories of rape, and many others like them, are not just incidental tales of deviant behavior.[3] Rape was fundamental to the cultural construction of Dutch national identity during the first half of the seventeenth century, and it served as a subtle means of voicing opposition during the second half.

Rape may seem an odd theme for a narrative that is meant to inspire moral behavior and patriotism, especially since the intellectual current of Christian Humanism popular in the Republic provided authors and artists with a wealth of classical and Biblical heroes. However, the impulse of inspiring proper behavior through the depiction of morally reprehensible alternatives was a fashionable seventeenth-century strategy.[4]

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[3] It was American feminist theorist Susan Brownmiller who pointed out that rape serves culturally condoned functions. See Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975). See also the introduction and chapter one of Ann Cahill, *Rethinking Rape* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

[4] Art historians have recognized this technique in the famous art of the Dutch Golden Age. Although modern scholars initially appreciated Dutch paintings as realistic, Eddy de Jongh encouraged an iconographical methodology to interpret paintings' concealed didactic and moral messages. Svetlana Alpers and Eric Sluijter argued that the focus on hidden meanings conceals audiences' enjoyment of the visual appeal of the painting. I am convinced by Wayne Franits' analysis that argues that meaning was not necessarily concealed, but rather a constituent element of Dutch painting in the seventeenth century. The symbolism and pictoral style conveyed meaning that was readily apparent to the contemporary viewer. See Simon Hendrik Levie and Eddy de Jongh, *Tot lering en vermaak: betekenissen van Hollandse genrevoorstellingen uit de 17de eeuw*. Tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 16 September–5 December 1976 (Amsterdam: 1976); Svetlana Alpers, *Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Wayne Franits, *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Franits, ed., *Looking at Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art: Realism Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Contemporaneous artists, including the preeminent Rembrandt van Rijn, depicted chaste women threatened with rape—such as Susanna (1636 and 1647) and Lucretia (1664 and 1666)—at least in part to commemorate their moral fortitude and to chastise the sexual corruption of the men in power who threatened to sully their virtue.[5]

This impulse to identify enemies and inimical behavior is also found in the literature of this period. Patriotic authors frequently created a single, reviled enemy in order to unite their own people against this evil force and to encourage the people to identify themselves as the vanguards of morality.[6] One well-worn example of this appears in the late medieval and early modern reconstructions of the ancient story of Lucretia, an honest noblewoman whose rape by a tyrannical monarch's son resulted in the establishment of the Roman Republic.[7] Niccolò Machiavelli and Coluccio Salutati adapted this tale of rape to bolster the Florentine Republic, P.C. Hooft did the same for the Dutch Republic (as chapter two of *Rape in the Republic* demonstrates), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire repeated this foundation myth for the French Republic. The frequent reformulation of this story at the genesis of various republics attests to the fact that it is not a neutral description of political formation; rather, authors employed variations on this story of rape as a way to identify their enemies as rapacious tyrants and themselves as defenders of a just,

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Press, 1997); E.J. Sluijter, "New Approaches in Art History," in *The Golden Age of Dutch Painting in Historical Perspective*, ed. F. Grijzenhout, and Henk Th. van Veen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 264–265.

[5] Julia Lloyd Williams, Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, and Sebastien A.C. Dudok van Heel, *Rembrandt's Women* (New York: Prestel, 2001); For a discussion of the treatment of Lucretia in Dutch engravings see Ilja Veldman, "Lessons for Ladies: A Selection of Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prints" *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 16 (1986): 113–127.

[6] Stephen Greenblatt found that creating an "other" was a central way a group of sixteenth-century middle-class Englishmen consciously formulated a new identity. See Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); See also Vilho Harle, "On the Concepts of the 'Other' and the 'Enemy'," *History of European Ideas* 1–3 (1994): 27–34; and Harle, *The Enemy with a Thousand Faces: The Tradition of the Other in Western Political Thought and History* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2000).

[7] Froma Zeitlin, "Configurations of Rape in Greek Myth," and Norman Bryson, "Two Narratives of Rape in the Visual Arts: Lucretia and the Sabine Women," in *Rape: An Historical and Social Enquiry*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), 122–151 and 152–173. Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and its Transformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

new order.[8] Members of nascent republics thus utilized rape narratives as validation for current, extensive political change.

Foreign Enemies and Dutch Identity

The Dutch had a particularly fierce need to manufacture a cohesive identity because the provinces that unified in 1579 to form the republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands (recognized by truce with Spain in 1609) had never existed as a unified kingdom, and the people who lived there did not form a single ethnic group. They had only been grouped together as part of the inheritance of the Burgundian Habsburg monarchs in the 1540s. Focusing on the characteristics of the enemy alleviated the need to delineate specific Dutch traits that could have proved divisive, such as religious or regional affinity.[9] The Dutch success in fabricating a common identity was manifested in their ability to overcome internal dissention, especially during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621), and in their defense of the Republic against the powerful Spanish Empire by the Peace of Munster in 1648, their English maritime competitors during the 1650s–1670s, and the French during the 1670s. Although these wars eventually depleted the Republic's resources and brought about the waning of the Dutch Golden Age, its impact on Dutch culture was still recognizable through the first quarter of the eighteenth century, which marks the end point of this book.

The men at the helm of the Republic in 1609, forty-one years after the commencement of the Revolt, were wealthy merchants and politicians of bourgeois origins, nobles, and officials of the Reformed Church.[10] They

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[8] Melissa M. Matthes, *The Rape of Lucretia and the Founding of Republics: Readings in Livy, Machiavelli and Rousseau* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 4–5.

[9] See A.C. Duke, Judith Pollmann, and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). In this volume, see especially Pollmann, "'Brabanters do fairly resemble Spaniards after all.' Memory, Propaganda and Identity in the Twelve Years' Truce," 211–227. See also J.W. Koopmans, ed., *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800)*, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 13 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005). For an examination of the Dutch use of *"patria," "vaderland,"* and more inclusive expressions of Dutch identity, such as *"het gansche Nederlanden,"* see Alastair Duke, "From King and Country to King or Country? Loyalty and Treason in the Revolt of the Netherlands" in his *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London and Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 175–198.

[10] During the late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century, there was a surge in the number of trained professional civil servants who took power at the expense

and their compatriots were a diverse group with different regional and local loyalties, religious affiliations, and political expectations. Compared to other populations in Europe, the inhabitants of the Republic were exceptionally literate, tolerant of other religious groups, and cosmopolitan. In hindsight, many people are fascinated by the "exceptionalism" of the Netherlands, where the government successfully resisted the European trend toward absolute monarchy, the economy defied the existence of a general European crisis, and the middle class dominated society.[11] At the time, however, the decentralized rule of the Republic and the diversity and disunity of its inhabitants made it very difficult to define the Dutch.

Scholars have recognized that due to these exceptional circumstances, a much broader range of the population had a stake in formulating Dutch identity than in countries where a powerful monarch invented and imposed a common identity to centralize his control.[12] A wide range of urban actors—including noblemen, magistrates, Calvinists, craftsmen, shopkeepers, laborers, and middling professionals—forged the new Republic through the public negotiation of distinct, sometimes antagonistic, goals. From the first moments of rebellion, these men created a political culture not widely articulated in theory, but evident in public rituals and in the seizure of popular media.[13] They expressed identity and independence in a variety of ways: staging pageants in which a single maiden represented the entire Low Countries, crafting maps that reflected a sense of "Netherlandishness", spreading rumors about the unfavorable consequences of Spanish legislation and obstructing its enforcement, and

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of, and in many cases alongside members of the lesser nobility in the United Provinces. These new bourgeois officials were merchants or industrial capitalists who took up positions on town councils, served as judges in provincial courts, and generally dominated the provincial states. For a breakdown of the participants of the Dutch Revolt and their roles see *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt*, ed. Graham Darby (London: Routledge, 2001) and Martin van Gelderen, *The Dutch Revolt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 49–51, 102.

[11] C.A. Davids and Jan Lucassen, *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[12] This was the focus of conferences held at Leiden University in 2000 and 2004 and these discussions resulted in two edited volumes on Dutch identity: Duke, Pollmann, and Spicer, *Public Opinion* and Robert Stein and Pollmann, eds., *Networks, Regions, and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300–1650* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010). Another seminal text on this topic is: Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Farnham, England, 2009).

[13] Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

publishing political works emphasizing patriotism and the defense of traditional privileges.[14]

It was these members of the urban community who cultivated a sense of national identity through the use of gendered, sexual imagery.[15] In polemic prints, histories, and plays, patriotic male authors created an ideal citizen who was, first and foremost, male. They defined this ideal citizen by describing his antithesis. Unlike the Spanish enemy, he was not a rapacious warrior; he did not ravage women, violate other men's homes, destroy churches, trample on the time-honored charters of the urban community, or disregard noble prerogatives. In contrast, Dutch men fought to protect their wives and daughters, their homes, their churches, and their rights. Moreover, Dutch men worked to protect the nation, imagined as a beautiful, vulnerable woman. Thus casting themselves as good husbands, fathers, and patriots capable of defending their wives, daughters, and nation from sexual threats, these authors nurtured an identity that was at once inclusive and inspirational.

The Family and Power

The definition of Dutch men as those who protect wives and daughters from rape also provided the terms through which Dutch men defended their claims to political power against internal competitors. During the Revolt, new Protestant elites replaced the committed Catholic nobles and regents who had been in power before 1572. This was not a radical shift, however, because these new elites were most frequently sons or relatives of those men who had been pushed out of office.[16] Although this meant that certain families maintained the power they had enjoyed before the

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[14] See Henk van Nierop, Juliaan Woltjers, Guido Marnef, and Andrew Sawyer in *Public Opinion*, and Duke and Pollmann in *Networks, Regions, and Nations.* To this list Benjamin Schmidt adds: "the remarkable outpouring of histories and poetry, broadsides and ballads, atlases and almanacs, paintings and prints . . ." Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: the Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xxiv.

[15] In making this claim, I follow Joan Scott's insistence that we pay attention to "the particular and contextually specific ways in which politics constructs gender and gender constructs politics." Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1070.

[16] Exceptions to this continued control of families who ruled before 1572 are in cities that experienced drastic purges, such as Amsterdam in 1578, Middelburg in 1574, and Groningen 1594. Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 341–343.

Revolt, many of these younger sons and relatives felt compelled to defend and justify their authority. Many emphasized certain tenets of Reformed Protestantism in their efforts to stabilize the post-Revolt social hierarchy. In this context, *Rape in the Republic* will argue that depictions of rape served to galvanize the Dutch social hierarchy in favor of the wealthy and powerful by encouraging subordinate men and women to accept limitations placed upon them. This does not suggest that, as American theorist Susan Brownmiller argued, rape empowers all men at the expense of all women.[17] Within the complex social system that developed as the seventeenth century progressed, wealthy fathers ruled the Republic, their communities, and their families, but they did so alongside empowered wives, at the expense of poorer, younger, and single men and women.

In the Dutch Republic, power was based upon gendered familial criteria in so far as a man could seize power based on his gender and his position as the eldest son of a powerful family.[18] Within the household, fathers exercised power over their wives, children, and servants. Men of slightly greater consequence, such as schoolmasters, pastors, officials, and magistrates, led the larger communal "family." More powerful patriarchs policed lesser ones to ensure the observance of proper discipline. These included reformed preachers who made home visits, town councilors who formed watches, and members of the civic militia who patrolled cities.[19] Yet more powerful and influential fathers exercised control as regents over larger cities and the provinces. At the apex of this hierarchy were the stadholders, who ruled over the Dutch populace as fathers of the fatherland.[20] At each level, men reinforced their authority through the language of fatherhood and by associating themselves with the patriarchal image of God.[21]

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[17] Brownmiller, *Against Our Will.*

[18] Julia Adams terms this confluence of family and state interests in the Netherlands the "familial state," which is founded by elite male family heads who seize local state offices and establish themselves as regent patriciates. These family heads then struggle to maintain control by distributing political offices and privileges based on family ties. Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 505–6, 512–513. For a German example see Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor: 2004).

[19] Israel, 679, 685.

[20] Adams notes that at the highest levels men justified their claims to power "on the basis of hereditary qualification and patriarchal power, rather than on the basis of adherence to rational-legal procedure or other substantive standards of justice." Adams, 512–3.

[21] Many scholars have referred to the kind of social order I have just sketched as a form of patriarchy, which Adams defines as the exercise of paternal rights and the exercise of male dominance. Adams, 6, 29–34. I use patriarchy to denote the rule of male heads of

The ideological support for the exercise of paternal rights within the home and the larger community came from a variety of sources and had extensive consequences for all family members. Reformed ministers reinforced the rights of husbands over wives by unfailingly exhorting the latter to submit to their husbands' authority.[22] To ensure wifely obedience, it was not rare for these Protestant moralists to suggest the use of corporal punishment.[23] Even the advice that encouraged husbands to eschew violence signaled that physical coercion was indeed a husband's prerogative.[24] The ubiquitous requirement for women to submit to their husbands and the constant possibility of punishment—even if violence was unlikely—doubtlessly impacted a woman's sense of self-worth.[25]

Although Protestant advice advocated the rule of husbands over their wives, the latter also benefited from this partnership, which improved their status and bettered their lives in other ways as well. The same sources

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households. Also persuasive is Pavla Miller's explanation for the extention of patriarchal power during the early modern period as a means to safeguard economic resources and extend state power. Miller, *Transformations of Patriarchy in the West: 1500–1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998) xiii, 2. See also Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 151.

[22] Many scholars describe how Protestant theology buttressed patriarchal ideology in early modern Europe. See for instance, R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550–1750* (London: Routledge, 1989), 144–151; Joel F. Harrington, "Hausvater and Landesvater: Paternalism and Marriage Reform in Sixteenth-Century Germany," *Central European History* 25 (1992): 52–75; Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals, in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Gordon J. Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family and Political Attitudes in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Brunswick, 1988), xv–xviii; John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 115–139; Steven E. Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled. Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983); Quentin Skinner, *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought. Volume 2: Age of the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 1–12, 65–108. Stone, 154–156.

[23] Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 32, 284. Donald Haks, *Huwelijk en gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw: processtukken en moralisten over aspecten van het laat 17de- en 18de-eeuwse gezinsleven* (Utrecht: HES, 1985), 153. Stone, 197–8.

[24] Haks cites Dutch jurists Hugo Grotius, Gisbertus Voetius, and others as opponents of corporal punishment. Influential Dutch Pietist and court minister to William of Orange, Jean Taffin, also rejected hitting wives as a means to curb their natural weaknesses. S. van der Linde, *Jean Taffin: hofprediker en raadsheer van Willem van Oranje* (Amsterdam: Bolland, 1982), 185.

[25] In Derek Phillips' assessment of the well-being of the inhabitants of Amsterdam, he makes this point: "an excessive concern for the reactions of the more powerful person always undercuts or threatens self-respect and integrity". However, Phillips also argues that a husband most frequently had "a benevolent concern for his wife's well-being." Phillips, *Well-Being in Amsterdam's Golden Age* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 117–119.

that required wifely submission also demanded that husbands love, honor, and respect their wives. Following John Calvin, whose ideas were especially influential among the early modern Dutch, Reformed ministers exhorted men to love their wives as fervently as Christ loves his church.[26] Furthermore, for Calvin, submission was not just for the powerless, but a requirement for all men and women. Not only should all humans submit themselves to God, but also even the most powerful men should submit themselves to their subordinates in a system of mutual obligation.[27]

Calvin's language of love and mutual obligation within marriage has led many scholars to emphasize Protestantism's positive impact on the lives of wives.[28] Religious historian Karen Spierling argues that Calvin softened a much harsher pre-existing medieval patriarchy.[29] Susan Amussen characterizes the extensive power of the male head over members of his household in early modern England as a "benevolent patriarchy."[30] In his book, *When Fathers Ruled*, Steven Ozment emphasizes the Reformers' conviction that they were freeing nuns from the onerous lifestyle of chastity and releasing them into the freedom of the home.[31] Historians of the family, including Lawrence Stone and Donald Haks, chart a slow evolution from patriarchal to companionate styles of marriage over the course of the early modern period.[32] While noting the commingling of

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[26] "... [T]he apostle requires that they cherish toward their wives no ordinary love; for to them, also, he holds out the example of Christ,—*even as Christ also loved the church*." Jean Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 318. This is his discussion of Ephesians 5:25. For more on this see John H. Bratt, "The Role and Status of Women in the Writings of John Calvin," in *Renaissance Reformation, Resurgence*, ed. Peter de Klerk (Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary, 1976), 1–18.

[27] In his commentary on the apostle Paul's book of Ephesians, Calvin explains, "... no man ought to endeavor to avoid subjection." In this statement he includes "even kings and governors, whose very authority is held for the service of the community." Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries,* 316–7. See also Christine Peters, *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 314–315. Karen E. Spierling, "Honor and Subjection in the Lord: Paul and the Family in the Reformation" in *A Companion to Paul in the Reformation*, ed. R. Ward Holder (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 486.

[28] Even Calvin left a scrap of evidence that he cherished his own wife, Idelette de Buren. Upon her death, he wrote that she was: "the best companion of my life." Ross William Collins, *Calvin and the Libertines of Geneva* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1968), 203.

[29] Spierling, "Honor and Subjection," 469–470, 478.

[30] Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1988), 39. See also Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 112.

[31] Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled.*

[32] For a survey of the extensive literature considering the rise of companionate marriage in Europe between 1400 and 1800, see Elizabeth Crawford, *European Sexualities, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 13–19.

both patriarchal and companionate elements within seventeenth-century marriages, cultural historian Simon Schama notes that there is proof of a "new informal tenderness and reciprocal friendship" between husband and wife at this time.[33]

In assessing the influence of Protestantism and patriarchy on women's lives, we must keep two things in mind. First, there was a great deal of variety in marital relationships. Merry Wiesner-Hanks explains that the relative age, social class, and wealth of the husband and wife impacted the quality of the relationship. She explains that marriages were more likely egalitarian:

> . . . . when husband and wife were close in age, of the same or relatively the same social class, when the woman had brought some property or cash to the marriage as her dowry, and when her birth family supported her in disputes with her husband.[34]

This is an important indication of which women stood to benefit the most from marriage. It was middle- and upper-class women who brought property and cash to their marriages, who had birth families powerful enough to defend their interests if they clashed with their husbands, and whose alliances with their social equals in marriage improved their fortunes. Second, as women's historian Judith Hokke clarified, a husband's affection for his wife could not be confused for parity.[35] As we will see in chapter three, Dutch domestic conduct books emphasized a language of love and friendship between spouses. However, this language of companionship within marriage did not displace patriarchal authoritarianism, but rather changed the way patriarchy was experienced and enforced.[36]

Regardless of the requirement for female submission to husbands—an unquestioned norm—marriage was the primary means by which women allied themselves with more powerful members of society. Married women benefited from their husbands' greater financial means and social

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[33] Schama, 424.

[34] Wiesner-Hanks, 79–80.

[35] Judith Hokke, "Mijn alderliefste Jantielief.' Vrouwen en gezin in de Republiek: Regentenvrouwen en hun relaties" in *Vrouwenlevens 1500–1850*, ed. Ulla Jansz et al. (Nijmegen: SUN, 1987), 53.

[36] There are many critiques of literature on companionate marriage including Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1340–1840* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1986) and Jack Goody, *The Development of Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Sarah Hanley emphasizes the authoritarianism of early modern patriarchy in Hanley, "Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies* 16 (1989): 4–27.

status, whereas lifelong single women were often poorer and lived a more precarious existence.[37] Unfortunately the number of single women spiked during the seventeenth century, especially in towns, making the possibility of marriage less likely for many women. Across northwestern Europe, lifelong singlewomen usually made up 10–20 percent of all adult women during the early modern period.[38] In harbor towns such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam, there were even fewer men available for marriage due to the fact that a great many worked dangerous jobs at sea or abroad.[39] Also, lifelong singlewomen were most disadvantaged by the sixteenth-century trend to exclude women from trades once open to them, because married women could assist their husbands in skilled work, wives of men abroad could conduct business on their own, and widows could frequently take over the workshops of their deceased husbands.[40] The economic burden of never marrying is discernible in the fact that singlewomen predominated in the poorest areas of towns and they often had to live together with other singlewomen in order to subsist.[41]

It is telling that a humanist debate on the capacities and proper roles of women that praised housewives closely followed this constriction of women's economic opportunities. This debate, which reached a high point among Dutch authors during the 1630s and 1640s, is well known for its effusive praise of women's intellectual achievements—especially those

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[37] For a thorough examination of the lives of European singlewomen see Judith Bennett and Amy Froide, eds. *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250–1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press) and Amy Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[38] Maryanne Kowaleski, "Singlewomen in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: The Demographic Perspective," in *Singlewomen*, ed. Bennett and Froide, 34.

[39] Of the 30,000 people who left for the East Indies employed by the VOC (Dutch East India Company), only one-third returned. It is more difficult to estimate the number of men who died undertaking other dangerous seafaring activities including whaling and fishing, naval jobs, and in the employ of the West India Company. Phillips, 33, 109. Maarten Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 144.

[40] Judith Bennett, *Ale, Beer and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300–1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Martha Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Ariadne Schmidt, "Zelfstandig en bevoogd: speelruimte van vrouwen rond 1650," *Tijdschrift Voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 29 (2003): 28; Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood: weduwen in Leiden in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Prometheus/Bakker, 2001); Manon van der Heijden, A. Schmidt, and R. Wall, "Broken Families: Economic Resources and Social Networks of Women Who Head Families," *The History of the Family* 12 (2007): 223–232; Van der Heijden and Danielle van den Heuvel, "Sailors' Families and the Urban Institutional Framework in Early Modern Holland," *The History of the Family* 12 (2007): 296–309.

[41] Bennett and Froide, 16–17.

of the life-long singlewoman Anna Maria van Schurman.[42] However, the authors of this discussion ultimately concluded that adult women in general should not be independent singlewomen, but rather wives and mothers. In expressing this opinion, Protestant moralist Jacob Cats encouraged women to view domestic duties as a calling. He likened housekeeping to running the country to play up the importance of this vocation and to make it more appealing.[43] Alternatively, the Dordrecht doctor Johan van Beverwijck's arguments were more circuitous.[44] Although Van Beverwijck's *The Excellence of Women* (1636) argues that women are superior to men in some ways, Dutch women's historian, A. Agnes Sneller, convincingly demonstrates that this is in fact just a subtle stratagem to make women's relegation to the home attractive. In Van Beverwijck's work, women's superiority manifests itself in domestic tasks. Moreover, his examples of women who fought and ruled well took place when no men were available for those tasks, thus rendering such examples irrelevant for contemporary Dutch housewives.[45] Even Van Schurman, whose 1638 dissertation contended that women should be allowed greater access to education, later moderated her position by conceding that most adult women would marry and have children because only those women with the means and free time to study could follow her exceptional path.[46] Therefore, even authors with optimistic views about women's capacities envisioned most adult women as housewives and invested this position with value and honor.

Other evidence concurs with this humanist debate that wives and mothers were held in much higher regard than other women. Early modern

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[42] C. Boekema-Sciarone and T. Loonen "De vrouw in het werk van Cats" *Bulletin van de Werkgroep Historie en Archeologie onder Auspiciën van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen* 28 (1978): 43.

[43] Boekema-Sciarone and Loonen, 36. William Gouge does this as well in *Of Domesticall Dvties: Eight Treatises* (London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for William Bladen, 1622), 18.

[44] This view is distinct from Boekema-Sciarone and Loonen's argument that Van Beverwijck and Van Schurman are resolute defenders of women while Jacob Cats takes a moderate position among his contemporaries in this debate.

[45] A. Agnes Sneller, *Met man en macht: analyse en interpretatie van teksten van en over vrouwen in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1996), 77. Van Beverwijck's ideas about women were not constant. He emphasized women's intellectual capacities in his *The Excellence of Women* (1636) that was intended for a mixed audience, but peppered his medical tomes, *The Treasury of Health* (1636) and *The Treasury of Illness* (1642) with many statements of female inferiority, including assumptions of women's stupidity and lack of judgment. Van Gemert, "The power of the Weaker Vessels: Simon Schama and Johan van Beverwijck on Women" in *Women of the Golden Age*, ed. Kloek et al. 45, 48. Sneller, 75.

[46] Boekema-Sciarone and Loonen, 45.

society believed that wives were better governed than their single counterparts due to the supervision of their husbands; single women, and older single women in particular, were regarded with a great deal of suspicion.[47] By elevating marriage to the ideal lifestyle, the Protestant Reformation further augmented the status of married men and women at the expense of single men and women.[48] This devaluation of single individuals weighed far more heavily on women as evinced by the European witch-hunts that peaked between 1560 and 1660.

During the witch-hunts, Europeans executed roughly 45,000 people, of whom over 75 percent were women.[49] This hunt targeted single women due in part to the educated elite's belief that this demographic was more likely to engage in witchcraft because of their lack of social power and their insatiable sexual passions. They reasoned that a single woman would have had no other means to empower herself besides magic and, lacking a sexual partner, she would crave for the devil to fulfill her sexual desires—the basis of the witch's pact with him.[50] Although the death penalty for convicted witches was discontinued in the Dutch Republic at the end of the sixteenth century—much earlier than elsewhere—and there was never any great zeal for hunting witches in the northern provinces of the Low Countries, single women were still targets of suspicion and greater social prejudice.[51] The fear of women's sexuality also inspired

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[47] Bennett and Froide, 10–13. Wiesner-Hanks argues that economically independent singlewomen inspired both anxiety among local governors and "explicit legal restrictions on women's choice of work, place of residence, free-time activities, and even relations with their own family." Wiesner-Hanks, "Having Her Own Smoke: Employment and Independence for Singlewomen in Germany 1400–1750," in *Singlewomen*, ed. Bennett and Froide, 196. See also Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 41; Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (London: Routledge, 2000), 64.

[48] Before the Reformation many medieval Christian authors considered virginity ideal and marriage a necessity for those who could not achieve the ideal. Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 83.

[49] In some places the percentage of women accused exceeded ninety. Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987), 141.

[50] Historians have pointed out that it was assumed that women's weaker intellectual capacity meant that the devil could easily con them, that women were more frequently implicated in charges of witchcraft because their occupations as cooks, healers, and midwives gave them the opportunity to engage in magic, and that as the weakest members of society they were easy scapegoats for communal anxiety. Levack, 146–8. Bennett and Froide are more specific about those most frequently accused: "... women outnumbered men, the poor outnumbered the rich, the old outnumbered the young, widows outnumbered singlewomen, and singlewomen outnumbered wives." Bennett and Froide, 14.

[51] The Dutch elite, including Catholic and Protestant theologians, lawyers, doctors, and judges, failed to support the idea that witches copulated with the devil or met in

religious and secular courts to call more women to appear before them so they could more carefully scrutinize women's sexual acts through a criminalization of adultery, infanticide, and fornication.[52]

By marrying, women improved their material circumstances, claimed a protector, and attained an esteemed position in society. A wife accepted subordination in accordance with contemporary social norms and religious beliefs, but also strategically to ally herself with her husband, enjoy his wealth and social status, and dominate others by virtue of her connection to him. Thus, we will see that the exercise of power within the patriarchal hierarchy was not simply by men at the expense of women, but rather, as Anthony Fletcher has formulated it: "Women have been the agents of, and have often colluded in, patriarchy as well as resisting it . . ."[53] Dutch moralists gave certain women good reasons to support the Protestant cause: subjecting themselves to husbands allowed them to become esteemed wives and thereby dominate the younger members of their households and the poorer and less-esteemed members of their society. As chapter two illuminates, Dutch patriarchs prided themselves on their good treatment of wives, and well-to-do wives enjoyed the benefit of their honorable position.

Married couples, unquestionably headed by the husband, also extended control over their children into adulthood by struggling to direct their children's marriage prospects. The late sixteenth century witnessed a shift in whose consent was deemed most valuable in establishing a marriage:

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large numbers at the Sabbath—ideas that led to large-scale witch hunts elsewhere when authorities demanded that convicted witches denounce their accomplices. Two rare witch-hunting episodes in the territory that would become the United Provinces occurred in the Groniger Ommelanden claiming twenty lives in 1547 and five in 1562 and in Westerwolde claiming seven lives in 1587 and twelve in 1589. Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Willem Frijhoff, *Witchcraft in the Netherlands: From the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century*. History of the Low Countries, 1 (Rotterdam: Universitaire Pers, 1991), 26.

52 Roper reports that half of all criminal charges brought against women were for sexual offences, whereas for men this number was only 14 percent. Moreover, many women charged with sexual offences are not included in this number since this excludes those who came before the Augsburg Discipline Lords. Roper, *Holy Household*, 83. Els Kloek also found that women were punished more frequently than men for living "unchaste lives" in Leiden. Kloek, "Criminaliteit en sexe in de confessieboeken van Leiden, 1678–1794," in *Wie hij zij, man of wijf. Vrouwengeschidenis in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Ph.D. thesis Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), 155.

53 Fletcher, xvi. Julie Hardwick also points out how women shared and negotiated for power in Nantes after 1560 in her book, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998). For England see Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch, and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

the parents' or the prospective spouses'. Whereas the medieval Church recognized a marriage as long as the bride and groom offered their consent, after the Reformation both Catholic and Protestant countries alike legislated more stringent marriage requirements in both secular and church courts.[54] In France, for instance, jurists passed two edicts in 1579 that required parental consent for male and female minors and asserted that children who married without parental consent could be charged with forced abduction (*rapt de violence*) or willing elopement (*rapt de seduction*)—both of which were capital offenses.[55]

The States General of the United Provinces followed France's lead in privileging parental consent when they passed the Political Ordinance of 1580. This law made the consent of parents necessary for any bride under the age of twenty and any groom under the age of twenty-five.[56] Similar to the French edict of 1579, this ordinance also sought to deter or punish children who ignored the requirement of parental consent by threatening a capital sentence for abduction (*raptus*). Although few of these marital conflicts reached the Dutch courts, these laws further enhanced the power of wealthy parents who could also threaten their children with disinheritance or ostracism. This law proved durable; parents exercised legal veto rights over their children's selection of spouse until 1809.[57]

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[54] Roper highlights this development in Augsburg, specifically pointing out that city councils seized control over marriage and sexuality from the Church through the introduction of Discipline Lords and Marriage Courts in the 1520s and 1530s. Roper, 21–22. See also Roper, "Going to Church and Street: Weddings in Reformation Augsburg," *Past and Present* 106 (1985): 62–101. Van der Heijden documents a similar development of marriage commissions in Holland in the 1570s. Van der Heijden, *Huwelijk in Holland: stedelijke rechtspraak en kerkelijke tucht, 1550–1700* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1998), 36–37. For the Tridentine marriage reforms see James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 563–5.

[55] Hanley, 10. Hans Storme, *Die Trouwen wilt voorsichtelijck: predikanten en moralisten over de voorbereiding op het huwelijk in de Vlaamse bisdommen* (*17e–18e eeuw*) (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1992), 196.

[56] This ordinance also demanded that a marriage be announced at least three times publicly to ensure that there were no known impediments and considered the union valid if solemnified either by Reformed church ministers or by civic officials. Haks, 114–115. For a more detailed discussion of the Criminal Ordinance of 1570, the Political Ordinance of 1580, individual city ordinances, and the Marriage Regulation of 1656, see Van der Heijden, 45–55.

[57] Julia Adams, "The Familial State: Elite Family Practices and State-Making in the Early Modern Netherlands," *Theory and Society* 23 (1994): 509. Haks, 126–7. Van der Heijden, 46–48.

It was in part the wealthy parents' desire to have greater control in the politics of marriage that fuelled the impulse to more closely regulate their children's marriage prospects.[58] By forbidding clandestine weddings, requiring parental consent, and intensifying the punishment for elopement, patriarchs and politicians in countries with political systems as divergent as absolutist France and the decentralized Netherlands worked together to more completely direct the formation of family alliances.[59] As the seventeenth century advanced, it became progressively more important in the Dutch Republic for a patriarch to marry well—and to marry his children well—because most high offices were attained by nepotism. Family heads either appointed their heirs to positions of power or had them appointed. Although most offices (such as the directorship of the Dutch East-India Company, seats on town councils, or the position of burgemeester) could not be formally inherited or bought, allying one's family with another powerful family provided patriarchs with legitimate claims to the public offices dominated by the allied family and with a new web of powerful political supporters.[60]

This expanded power of parents over their children's marriage prospects was one of many ways certain inhabitants of the Dutch Republic strategically employed rape to assert power. Rape thus not only helped the Dutch promote a sense of common identity, but it also served to stabilize existing social hierarchies that favored wealthy patriarchs and their wives at the expense of poorer, younger, and single men and women. While employing discussions of rape, popular Protestant advice supported the idea that wealthy men should not be punished for rape under certain conditions, that well-to-do raped women were worthy wives, and that children should follow their parents' guidelines in their choice of spouse.

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[58] Adams, 509. Sherrin Marshall, *The Dutch Gentry, 1500–1650: Family, Faith, and Fortune* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 51. See also J. Aalbers and Prak, *De Bloem der Natie: adel en patriciaat in de Noordelijke Nederlanden* (Meppel: Boom, 1987). Wiesner-Hanks notes that the late sixteenth-century Protestant and Catholic drive toward confessionalization and social discipline also spurred this marital reform. Wiesner-Hanks, "Having Her Own Smoke . . .," in *Singlewomen*, ed. Bennett and Froide, 196.

[59] Hanley terms this alliance the "family-state compact." She asserts that in France between 1556 and 1789, jurists rewrote the laws governing marriage in order to favor the formation of family alliances. Her study highlights the way these changes increased the power of men over women and children and the negative impact of political centralization on the lives of women. Hanley, 16.

[60] Adams, 508–509. After 1650, the regents came as close to having a closed patrician oligarchy as possible because they tended to marry exclusively among themselves. Israel, 125. For a specific example of two wealthy families see also Hokke, 51.

Meanings of Rape

From these examples, the flexibility of rape discourse is quite evident; some employed it to inspire national identity, others to reinforce the social hierarchy. As *Rape in the Republic* will demonstrate, yet other groups employed rape discourse to kindle political and religious opposition. In this sense, rape is an abstraction that ignites a sense of betrayal, disgust, and a desire for retribution, even a sense of pride in overcoming evil forces. Regardless of whether the stories have any basis in truth, depictions of rape possess a concrete power because of their capacity to motivate people. As a stock tool of propagandists, rape is ideal not only because of its emotive value, but also because it has the capacity to obscure nuanced conflict with a stark contrast of right and wrong. Since rape is a term that stands in for an entire narrative, it has the potential to mask more than it reveals.[61] Stories of rape frequently prompt an impulsive, irrational response that hinders the rational analysis of a situation.

The power of rape to obscure meaning makes defining it all the more essential, and yet, in many ways it defies a clear-cut definition. Not only do the seventeenth-century understandings of rape differ from our modern conceptions; there were also many contradictory understandings of rape that coexisted in the minds of seventeenth-century men and women. Roman law and literature provided two conflicting models of rape that proved quite influential.[62] The first Classical model of rape, the oft-repeated story of Lucretia, insinuates that the rape of a married woman is a detestable crime. By violating a sexually unavailable woman in the sanctity of her husband's home, Lucretia's rape is invariably considered reprehensible.[63] Her avengers are heroic men, responsible for the restora-

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[61] Dutch theorist Mieke Bal argues that the difficulty with rape is that it functions as an obscuring term used to abbreviate an entire narrative. See Bal, "Scared to Death" in *The Point of Theory: Practices of Cultural Analysis*, ed. Mieke Bal and Inge E. Boer (New York: Continuum, 1994), 38–39.

[62] L.Th. Maes, *Vijf eeuwen stedelijk strafrecht* (Antwerpen: De Sikkel, etc., 1947), 225–228. Cited in Van der Heijden, "Women As Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Criminal Cases of Rape, Incest, and Maltreatment in Rotterdam and Delft," *Journal of Social History* 33 (2000): 625 fn 20. See also Bryson in "Two Narratives of Rape," 152–173.

[63] Seduction that occurred in the home of the woman's husband or a male relative was perceived as a serious crime in Greek myth for which the woman's relatives would seek to kill the seducer according to Mary R. Lefkowitz, "Seduction and Rape in Greek Myth" in *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1993), 19, 21. The Romans shared the idea that to invade the household is criminal. Coppelia

tion of social and political normalcy and a new powerful Roman Republic. However, the fact that Lucretia's rapist was guilty did not confirm her innocence. Lucretia killed herself to verify that she did not commit adultery and to make sure that no immoral woman could use her example to escape the punishment for adultery.[64]

The second Classical model of rape that appears in seventeenth-century Dutch literature is the rape of the Sabine women. Rather than a criminal act, this kind of rape was often deemed a justifiable way for a man to claim a wife. Although we may refer to this as abduction, it fell under the term *raptus* and was conflated with rape well through the seventeenth century. Roman historian Livy explains that after Rome's neighboring peoples had rejected Romulus' embassy's request for wives for his overwhelmingly male populace, he devised and sanctioned the abduction of the Sabine women during the celebration of an outdoor festival. Romulus ordered his men not to sleep with the women until after an assembly the following day where Romulus assigned each as a wife to the Roman men. Several years later the larger Sabine populace rose up against the Romans to avenge this, but the Sabine women interceded on behalf of their Roman husbands and children.[65] Rape according to this model is not a sudden sexual crime, but a reasonable political strategy enacted to guarantee the propagation of one's society through both progeny and alliances with hostile neighbors.

Classical mythology provides many examples of this second paradigm of rape. Just as in the example of the Sabines, mythological rape focuses upon sexually available young women, is perpetrated outdoors, and produces remarkable children who have a lasting impact on their societies.[66] The biblical story of the Benjamite rape of the women of Shiloh also fits this model.[67] This story closely echoes the story of the rape of the Sabines in a number of ways. Like the Romans, the Benjamites were a predominantly male tribe that had no means to procreate because the other Israelites had made a pact to refuse to offer their daughters in marriage to

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Kahn, "Lucrece: The Sexual Politics of Subjectivity" in *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 146. Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The "Heroic" Tradition and Its Alternatives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 26.

64 Diana C. Moses, "Livy's Lucretia," 69.

65 Livy, *History of Rome*, Trans. B.O. Foster (London: William Heinemann, 1919), Book I, 9–13.

66 Lefkowitz, 21.

67 Judges 21. See the New International Version at http://www.biblegateway.com.

the Benjamites. Also like the Roman rape of the Sabines, the Benjamites abducted the unmarried women of Shiloh while the latter were outside celebrating a festival. The purpose of the abduction was to make the women legal wives, thereby restoring the alliance between the Benjamites and the other tribes of Israel and ensuring the propagation and mutual survival of these tribes.

Medieval canon law emphasized this second trope of rape, thus viewing *raptus* as a form of abduction that included forced coition. Gratian (c. 1140), the influential canonist, and other jurists who followed his lead, narrowed the definition of *raptus* to require the abduction of a young woman from her father's home and rejected the death penalty as punishment for rape in accordance with the idea that the Church should not shed blood. Over the next sixty years, other canon lawyers, in keeping with their efforts to maintain peace among powerful families, continued to soften the punishment for rape by contending that a ravisher should marry his victim as penance for his crime if she consented to be his wife.[68] In canon law, as was the case in the Classical precedent of the Sabine women and the biblical story of the women of Shiloh, rape was recognized as a way to contract a legal marriage.

For Calvin rape was both a heinous crime and a way to contract a legal marriage, depending on the situation. Feeling that rape was a particularly atrocious crime, rather like murder, he called unequivocally for the immediate execution of a man who had raped another man's wife or fiancée.[69] He emphasized the innocence of a raped woman whose "cries could not be heard . . . provided that she could prove her innocence by satisfactory testimony and conjecture."[70] Complicating his hatred of rape, however, was his support of the Mosaic law that commanded:

> If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall give the marriage present for her, and make her wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equivalent to the marriage present for virgins.[71]

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[68] Brundage, 249–250 and 311–313. Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 6–11.

[69] John Witte and Robert M. Kingdon cite Serm. Deut. 22:25–30; Comm. Deut. 22:23; Serm. 2 Sam. 13:1–14; Comm. Gen. 34:1–31. See Witte and Kingdon, *Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin's Geneva* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005), 121.

[70] Calvin, *Commentary on the Harmony of the Law*, Deuteronomy 22:23 (1563). Cited in Witte and Kingdon, 288.

[71] Exodus 22:16–17. Cited in Witte and Kingdon, 141.

Thus, if the father of the victim consented, Calvin agreed that the rapist and victim should be compelled to marry. Rectifying the sad consequences of rape presumably justified the contradiction of Calvin's own belief that the basis of marriage is mutual consent.[72]

Sources that unequivocally condemn rape include normative Dutch legal texts that offer advice on how to deal with soldiers who rape, such as the States General 1590 code of military conduct. Moreover, Prince Maurits (1567–1625) and Frederik Hendrik (1584–1647) ensured compliance with this code by regularly hanging troops for this offense.[73] Renowned jurist Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) also insists upon strict punishment for soldiers in his *On the Rights of War and Peace*, which was first published in 1625:

> Those who allowed it [rape in war], looked only at the injury done to the person, and judged that it was not incongruous to the laws of war that what belonged to the enemy should be subject to such injury. But others have judged better, who regarded, not only the injury, but the act of uncontrolled lust; and that the act has no tendency either to security or to punishment; and therefore ought to be no more unpunished in peace than in war . . . And it is fit that this rule should be observed by Christians, not only as part of military discipline, but as part of the Law of Nations: that is, that he who violates a woman, even in war, shall be everywhere liable to punishment.[74]

The effectiveness of this tough stance against rape can be inferred from the Venetian ambassador's comments in 1620 that Dutch citizens actually wanted garrisons to be quartered in their towns and did not fear leaving these troops alone with their wives and daughters.[75]

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[72] Witte and Kingdon, 121.

[73] Israel identifies this enforcement of stricter discipline among Dutch troops during the 1590s as a pivotal moment in the so-called Military Revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He explains that this was "a broad phenomenon encompassing new types of fortification, larger and better disciplined armies, greater resources, and more complex logistics." Israel, 267–8. For more on this see Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Cliff Rogers, ed., *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995). For how these reforms fit in the context of a humanist study of ancient military drill and ethical conduct see Gerhard Oestreich, Brigitta Oestreich, and H.G. Koenigsberger, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 76–87.

[74] Hugo Grotius, *On the Rights of War and Peace: An Abridged Translation* (Cambridge: John W. Parker, 1853) vol. I, XIX, 330. For more on Grotius' ideas about rape in war see Theodor Meron, *War Crimes Law Comes of Age: Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 129.

[75] Israel, 268. Oestreich, 79.

There was much greater ambiguity in the laws applied to civilians. This was due in part to a late sixteenth-century shift in the categorization of rape discernible in English, German, and Dutch legal codes. During the Middle Ages, rape was understood as a crime in which a man's moveable property, in the form of his wife or daughter, sustained damage. As such, it did not matter whether the raped woman was a willing sexual partner. To rape a woman was to damage her father's or husband's property and thus the perpetrator had to make restitution or endure punishment.[76] A medieval woman could prove she was a victim of rape by crying out, running away, or showing evidence of the violence done to her body through disheveled hair and torn clothing.[77]

By the seventeenth century, Dutch legal texts categorized rape as a sexual crime. As demonstrated by legal scholar Simon van Leeuwen's 1664 seminal commentary on Dutch law, rape was a violent act perpetrated against "a woman's will."[78] Both rape (*vrouwenkracht*) and abduction (*vervoeren*) remained serious crimes punishable "with the neck or with the sword," meaning by hanging or garroting, or by beheading.[79] Even a failed rape attempt carried the punishment of whipping and banishment.[80] However, the reclassification of rape from a property violation to a sexual

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[76] Miranda Chaytor, "Husband[ry]: Narratives of Rape in the Seventeenth Century," *Gender and History* 7 (1995): 378–407; Julia Rudolph, "Rape and Resistance: Women and Consent in Seventeenth-Century English Legal and Political Thought," *Journal of British Studies 39* (2000): 157–84; Gowing, 90. Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 145–6.

[77] Wolfthal demonstrates the use of this kind of evidence in medieval picture bibles. Wolfthal, 36–59.

[78] "Vrouwe-kragt, is de schoffieringe ende onteeringe van een Vrouw-persoon, met geweld, ende tegens haar wil gedaan . . ." Simon van Leeuwen, *Het Rooms-Hollands-Regt, waar in de Roomse wetten, met het huydendaagse Neerlands regt, in alles dat tot de dagelijkse onderhouding kan dienen, met een bysondre kortheit, so wel in de vaste regts-stoffen, als in de manier van regts-vordering over een gebragt werden: met allerhande ordonnantien, placcaten, hand-vesten, keuren, gewoonten, ende gevvijsden deser ende omleggende landen bevestigt / van niews beschreven, hersteld, ende vermeerderd* (Leyden: R.G. by Hackens, 1664), 428. English translation available: Van Leeuwen and Claas Isaakszoon, *Commentaries on the Roman-Dutch Law* (London: Printed by A. Strahan for J. Butterworth and Son, 1820), 478–9.

[79] For a description of capital punishments see Petrus Cornelis Spierenburg, *Judicial Violence in the Dutch Republic: Corporal Punishment, Executions and Torture in Amsterdam 1650–1750* (Amsterdam: Huisdrukkerij Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1978), 77. He suggests that the choice between hanging and garroting was based on the sex of the accused and that women were rarely hanged. Beheading was usually reserved for nobles.

[80] "Vrowe-kragt werd met den Hals of met den Swaarde gestraft . . . ende heeft de Onteerde Regt tot vergoedinge naar gelegenheit . . . De verkragtinge belet ofte beschut zijnde, werd hy evenwel gegeesselt ende gebannen, die tot sulken eynde jemand geweld aandoet . . ." Van Leeuwen, 428.

crime brought into question a woman's response to the sexual assault. Was the perpetrator able to seduce the woman and attain her consent or was it indeed against her will? In Van Leeuwen's legal handbook, this concern immediately follows the definition of rape as a terrible crime: "Other types of corruption or violation without violence are almost impossible to punish."[81] To ascertain whether rape or seduction had occurred, judges had to examine the plaintiff's mental state. In the words of historian, Lyndal Roper, this re-conception "align[ed] rape and seduction more closely to one another, so that a man's best defense against a charge of rape was now to argue that the woman had in some sense been 'persuaded' to his will."[82] Whereas medieval women could prove rape through external signs of violence, early modern rape victims had to prove that they had not consented to sex without the benefit of any objective, external proof.

The major problem with the concept of rape as a sexual crime and a shift of focus to a woman's refusal to consent was that proof was elusive and victims were simply not believed. Problematically, a woman's credibility largely depended on her reputation, which required the maintenance of her chastity. Thus, a woman's testimony was no longer believable once she had lost her chastity, whether through rape or consensual sex.[83] Such was the opinion of Reformed church councils as well. Maria van der Horst, for instance, was banned from communion in 1675 for being impregnated by a man named Borlemachi even though she told them that he "dragged [her] with violence and forced [her]" to sleep with him.[84] According to the court record, the council punished her for two reasons: firstly, "she already had a bad reputation" and secondly, she "had been in Borlemachi's house at other times."[85] Her bad reputation made her testimony suspect. Even more powerful is Van Leeuwen's unequivocal declaration that a young man's word carries more weight:

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[81] "Andere beslapinge ofte onteering sonder geweld, is by ons by na onstrafbaar." Van Leeuwen, 425.

[82] Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, 61.

[83] Gowing explains, "… [T]he emphasis on chastity as evidence of female virtue could mean that the more rape was understood as sexual, the harder it was to believe women. By the seventeenth century, the definition of rape as a sexual violation was likely to be accompanied by a lack of confidence in the evidence of the crime and a failure to believe its victims." Gowing, 92. Roper finds this to be true in sixteenth-century Augsburg as well. Roper, *Holy Household*, 84–5.

[84] Gereformeerde Kerkeraad van Amsterdam No 13, 132, 28/11/1675: "… met gewelt getrocken en geforceert te sijn …"

[85] Gereformeerde Kerkeraad van Amsterdam No 13, 136, 12/12/1675: "… onder een quaet gerugt en meermalen ten huijse van Borlemachi geweest waren."

> . . . a young man, being ready to declare by a dictated oath that he had not dishonored or carnally known the girl, and the girl being also willing to confirm the contrary thereof, the declaration of the young man properly made is admitted in preference to the declaration of the girl.[86]

If a victim of rape had no proof other than her own testimony, her accusations could easily be declared false.

Poor women's accusations were treated with a great deal of suspicion and they had little to gain through the legal process. Harking back to the older idea that rape was theft, penalties in rape cases increased with the social status of the victim, meaning conversely that masters who raped a servant could simply pay damages and money to serve as a dowry.[87] At the lower end of the social spectrum, there was in men's minds only a blurry distinction between prostitutes and singlewomen.[88] In Leiden, special university courts helped obscure the difference between prostitutes and singlewomen by dismissing the violent sexual activities of well-to-do students with lower class women as "youthful frivolity and recklessness" in order to spare the students' wealthy families public shame and to prevent the charges from damaging the students' career prospects.[89] In fact,

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[86] "Dies en werd een Vrouws-persoon niet geloovt in het seggen dat jemand haar heeft beslapen, alwaart dat zy 't selve in barens nood had verklaart, indien de person sulx ontkent . . . mits dat hy bereyd is hem met eede te suyveren, ende te verklaren dat hy haar noyt beslapen en heeft . . . maar het by-slapen bekent zijnde, werd de Vrouwspersoon geloovt in het aanwijsen van den Vader al bekende hy alleenlijk haar een Maand of een Jaar voor de verlossinge beslapen te hebben . . . Sulx is by het Hof ende den Hoogen Raad in Holland verscheyde-malen verstaan: Dat een Jongman bereid zijnde, met gestaavden eede te verklaren, de Dogter niet onteerd of vleyselijk bekent te hebben, ende de Dogter het tegendeel van dien mede met eede wil bevestigen, de verklaringe van den Jongman behoorlijk gedaan, voor de verklaring van de Dogter werd aangenomen." Van Leeuwen, 429.

[87] Van Leeuwen and Claas Isaakszoon, 302. Georges Vigarello cites a source from 1757 that elucidates this point: "Rape may be committed against all sorts of persons of the [female] sex . . . it is punished with greater or lesser rigour according to [their] quality." Vigarello, *A History of Rape: Sexual Violence in France from the 16th to the 20th Century* (Malden, Mass: Polity Press, 2001), 17.

[88] Karras explains that this connection had existed since the Middle Ages when canon lawyers defined a prostitute not as a woman who accepted money in exchange for sex, but as a promiscuous woman. The conflation of prostitutes and singlewomen continued because so many singlewomen worked at the trade and because of the venal nature of other heterosexual relations, in so far as women who were not prostitutes sought material compensation from suitors and husbands. In essence: "A poor woman who 'belonged' to no man was assumed to 'belong' to all men. Karras, "Sex and the Singlewoman," in *Singlewomen*, ed. Bennett and Froide, 133–5. The quotation is Bennett and Froide's summation of Karras' point in Bennett and Froide, 10.

[89] Neither servant women nor prostitutes were compensated in cases of rape that came before the Leiden University academic court. Wingens posits that students occasionally

many young women hoping to eventually marry worked for at least a few years as servants in order to earn money for a dowry. Frequently, however, living in the homes of masters and their sons, serving girls instead became subjects of "sexual harassment, rape, pregnancy, and in most of these cases, dismissal."[90]

This rule that the rape of lower-class women often went unpunished was occasionally contradicted if the rapist was the young victim's guardian or employer. Van Leeuwen expresses outrage when a man "responsible for [a woman's] chastity and care" instead "grossly misled" her. He directs jurists to punish these men "with whipping, banishment, and the confiscation of goods."[91] As examples of guilty men, Van Leeuwen mentions a schoolmaster who violated (*heeft onteerd*) a pupil and a shop owner who violated a girl who worked for him.[92]

Judges also considered age and marital status important considerations in determining whether a woman was a victim of rape. Post-pubescent and sexually experienced married women's accusations of rape were not often seen as credible. Roper explains that this is in part because of the common perception that women whose sexual desires have quickened become "voracious and dangerous."[93] Conversely, if the victim was a "young deflowered daughter," Van Leeuwen unequivocally demands that the violator (*Schender*) "must marry her or provide financial restitution for the loss of her virginity . . ."[94] Dutch historian Manon van der Heijden reveals that judges adhered to this prescriptive advice. In a study of

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raped women in public places as part of a ritual initiation. Marc Wingens, "Jeugdige ligtzinnigheid en losbandigheid. Seksueel gedrag en seksuele beleving van studenten ten tijde van de Nederlandse Republiek," in *Balans en perspectief van de Nederlandse cultuurgeschiedenis: grensgeschillen in de seks; bijdragen tot een culturele geschiedenis van de seksualiteit*, ed. Gert Hekma, D. Kraakman, and W. Melching (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990), 13, 18.

90 Bennett and Froide, 8–9.

91 "Andre beslapinge ofte onteeringe sonder geweld, is by ons by na onstrafbaar . . . Alleen dat een jonge Dogter ontmaagd zijnde, den Schender haar moet trouwen, of voor de ontmaagding betering doen in geld, naar beyder gelegenheid . . . Ten waar dat een al te jonge Dogter in onnoselheid groflijk misleid was, of een Vogd, of ander Persoon in wiens tugt ende voorsorg deselve bevolen was, deselve had beslapen, is met geesselen, bannen, ende verbeurte van goederen strafbaar . . ." Van Leeuwen, 425.

92 The fact that sexual crime perpetrated by a guardian was deemed more serious explains the case of Abraham de Herder described by Van der Heijden, *Huwelijk in Holland*, 136–138.

93 Roper, *Holy Household*, 85. Van der Heijden, "Women as Victims", 626.

94 "Alleen dat een jonge Dogter ontmaagd zijnde, den Schender haar moet trouwen, of voor de ontmaagding betering doen in geld, naar beyder gelegenheid." Van Leeuwen, 425.

eight cases of assault and six cases of rape prosecuted by the courts of Rotterdam and Delft during the seventeenth century, Van der Heijden found that judges issued severe punishments for the rape and assault of young virgins, but paid little attention to the rape and assault of married women.[95] Likewise, L. Th. Maes observed that in the city of Mechelen in the seventeenth century, jurists only sentenced to death the rapists of young unmarried virgins and even punished failed attempts with eternal banishment.[96] The court records of Leiden also bear this out: in four instances of the assault of young girls under the age of thirteen during the seventeenth century, judges ordered the public humiliation and banishment of the male attackers.[97]

Particularly scandalous in the eyes of seventeenth-century judges was the rape of a young family member. A complex case brought before the court in Leiden demonstrates that the judges considered the crime of incest more heinous than other forms of sexual assault. In 1620 Boudewijn de Grave, a spinner, "conversed in a fleshly manner" with his daughter, Madijken, who was about thirteen years old, and attempted to commit

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[95] Van der Heijden, 635. This also fits with Brundage's assessment that jurists taught that the molestation of a prepubescent girl merited the death penalty. Brundage, 531. See also Roper, *Holy Household*, 84–5 and Van der Heijden, *Huwelijk in Holland*, 156.

[96] Maes, 228.

[97] For example, the Leiden court banished Denijs Grebril, a textile worker, in 1647 for eight years for fornication with a four or five year old girl, Maritge Pieters. The accused apparently took the girl by the hand, led her to a lane and "dishonestly attacked her honor and intended to engage in further immorality." "... oneerlijck heeft aengetasten ende meerder wulpsheden met haer soude hebben gepleecht." 7-5-1647 Denijs Grebril geboren Spa, lakenwerker. Register 15, Folio 11. See also H.M. van den Heuvel, *De Criminele Vonnisboeken van Leiden, 1533–1811* (Leiden: Rijnland, 1978), 226. The case against Frans Claesz, a button maker, in 1686 does not give any details of his fornication with a young girl, but does state that the accused engaged in "foul acts and godless horniness" and that his punishment was to be tied to a pole and whipped and banned for life from Leiden. "... vuijligheden ende goddeloosen geijligheijt..." 1-2-1686, Frans Claesz, 30 jaar, knoopmaker. Register 22, Folio 50. See also Heuvel, 290. In 1695 Pieter van der Tas confessed that he placed his daughter of "ten or eleven years... on a stool and pushed up her dress... and striking his manliness against [her] womanliness, he sought to bring the former into the body of [his daughter]." Unable to do this, he confesses that he "stuck his finger in the body of his... child." "... tusschen de tien en elft jaren out sijnde... op een stoel(?) geset ende de rocken opgeraapt(?) heeft/ ende vervolgens hij gevangen met sijn manelijkheijt tegen de vroulijkheijt van sijn voorsc dogtertie aanstotende besogt heeft/ oft hij sijn voors gemagt [member] jn het lijff van her(?) selve konde brengen/ dog dat hij gevangen sulcxs ondoenlijk omme dende(?)/ 't selve losgelaten heeft/ Dat wijders hij gevangen daarop ten selven tijde sijn vinger jn het lijff van sijn maagdenomde kint keer gesteeken..." Van der Tas is mercifully subjected to public whipping, brand marking, and forced labor for thirty years perhaps because of his contrition and confession of his acts.

adultery with his daughter-in-law.[98] What are we to make of the fact that following each of these charges are crossed-out lines that describe the violence Boudewijn inflicted upon them—including the elusive charge of rape against a married woman?[99]

Was Boudewijn's punishment for incest severe enough to render the additional charges unnecessary? It is also possible that the unnamed daughter-in-law preferred to claim attempted rape rather than rape itself because: "[t]he lesser charge avoided close inquiry into a woman's morals, . . . and most importantly, required no admission on the woman's part that she had had sexual intercourse."[100] There is no evidence that the daughter or daughter-in-law were considered accessories to this crime, contrary to Van der Heijden's findings for Rotterdam and Delft.[101] In spite of the elimination of a few of the accusations against him, the court punishes Boudewijn with strangulation, his body is burned, and his goods confiscated. The court's decision sent a clear message: it sentenced him with quick death by strangulation as a merciful reward for his confession. They proceeded to burn his body due to the depravity of his crimes in order to totally obliterate this criminal.[102]

To further complicate this attempt to unravel meanings of rape, Dutch authors employed the equivalents of rape and abduction interchangeably—likely because of their inheritance of the Latin *raptus* (from *rapere*, to seize), which indicated both crimes.[103] As for the punishment of the crime of abduction, there is some disagreement among normative legal texts. If a man abducted a woman who had reached the age of majority with her

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[98] ". . . verscheijden malen toe 't sijner woon plaetse vleijsschelichen te converseren met sijn eygen dochtertgen genomt Madijken sijnde tusschen twalfen ende xiii jaren out . . ." 8-12-1620 Boudewijn de Grave, geboren Belle, spinner. Register 10, Folio 51. See also Heuvel, 147.

[99] The barely legible text reads that with Madijken, he worked ". . . contrary to her will . . . with blows and threats and sometimes force and violence . . ." and he ". . . sought to persuade [his daughter-in-law] to do this with threats" that he will destroy the life she has with her husband. [crossed out = 't welcke hij daer toe tegens wille ende danc met slagen ende verdere dreijgementen/ ooc somtijts met force ende gewelt/ende(?) sonder . . . (?) ende wederstant van t'zelve sijn dochtertgen gebracht heeft/] 8–12–1620 Boudewijn de Grave, geboren Belle, spinner. Register 10, Folio 51.

[100] Also relevant is Ruff's point: "Often, too, the less serious charge could be tried in a local court that was cheaper and more accessible than the higher courts that had to hear the graver charge. And conviction on the lesser charge was far easier." Ruff, 145.

[101] Van der Heijden, 635–636.

[102] Spierenburg, 77.

[103] The primary meaning of *raptus* was "forcible abduction", but by the classical period it regularly included a sexual act as well. Moses, 50. Laurie E. Maguire, *Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 84.

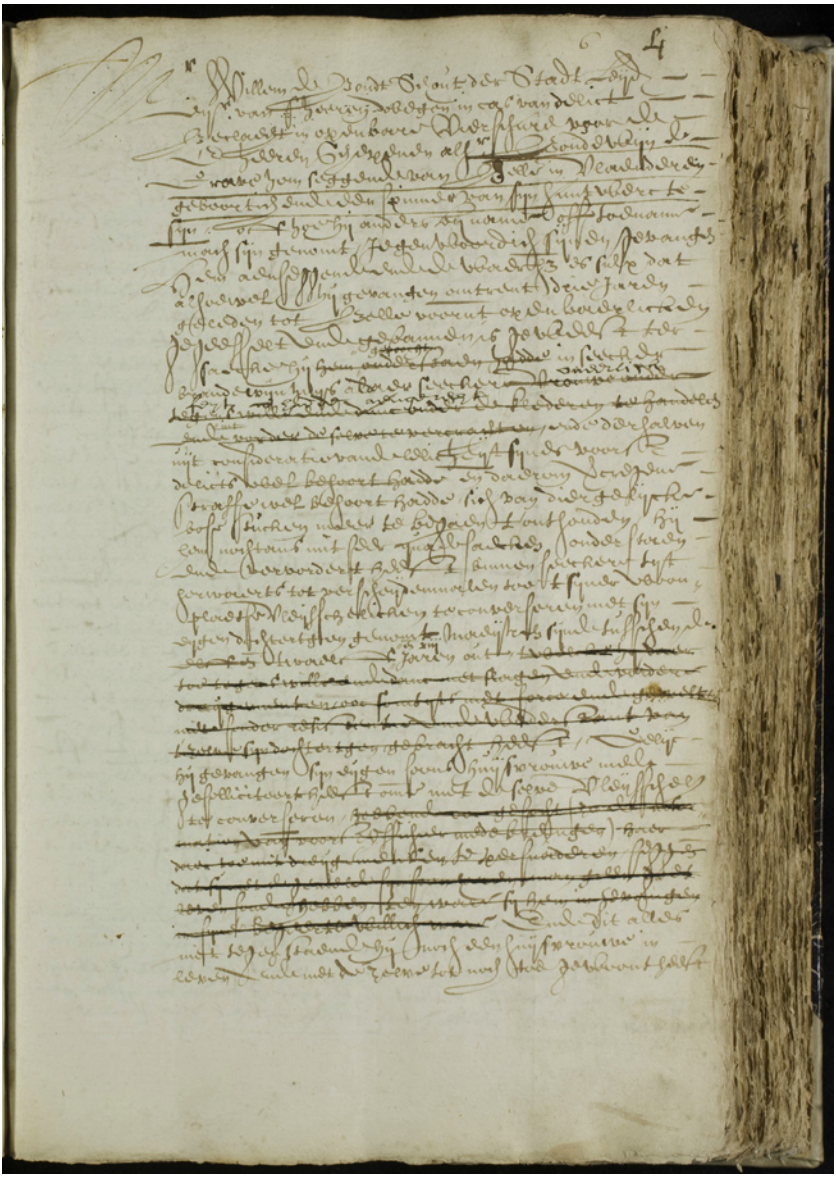

Plate 2. Leiden Court Record, Boudewijn de Grave, 8 December, 1620 in Regionaal Archief Leiden, Schepenbank (Oud Rechterlijk Archief), 508, Register 10 Folio 51.

consent, Van Leeuwen advocates no punishment.[104] Without specifying the age of the woman, jurist and moralist, Jacob Cats, who took part in the debate on women discussed in the previous section, contradicts Van Leeuwen by contending that a man who abducts a young woman with her consent "will in no way be spared from the punishment of death."[105] Van Leeuwen's stance again lays the burden of proof of coercion upon the abducted woman, while Cats' position punishes a man who seduces a young woman and thus causes her to act treacherously toward her parents by marrying without their consent.[106] Van Leeuwen also states: "an abducted Daughter may marry the one who abducted her . . . but whether this results in the annulment of the crime is uncertain"—a statement that affirms that forgiveness of the crime was in fact a possibility and allows the court to decide on a case-by-case basis.[107]

In light of the difficulty to prove rape, the tendency to accept the word of the man accused over that of the woman making the accusation, and the harshness of the punishment, it is not surprising that we find few cases of rape brought against men by adult women in the seventeenth-century Netherlands.[108] When jurists adjudicated these cases in court or discussed rape in their writings, they deemed a wide range of details vital in assessing

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[104] "Die een Dogter met geweld vervoert, is de dood schuldig . . . Maar indien het met haar sin ende wil geschiet, is 't selve niet strafbaar." Van Leeuwen, 426. According to the notes added by Cornelius Wilhelmus Decker, it is only the abduction of a woman who has reached the age of majority that cannot be punished if she consents to her abduction. Cornelius Wilhelmus Decker and John Gilbert Kotzé, *Van Leeuwen's Commentaries on Roman-Dutch Law* (London: Stevens and Haynes, 1921), 296.

[105] Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken* (Amsterdam: Jan van Heekeren [Anthony Hasebroek, Andries van Damme, wed. van Gysbert de Groot, Johannes Ratelband, en Pieter van Thol, in 's-Gravenhage], 1712), II, 37.

[106] Vigarello, 152–3.

[107] "De vervoerde Dogter mag met die geene die haar vervoert heeft, wel in Huwelijk treden . . . Maar of daar door de misdaad werd vernietigt, is niet seeker." Van Leeuwen, 427.

[108] Legal historian Sjoer Faber found only eight charges of rape in the 12,689 Amsterdam criminal punishments for the period between 1680 and 1811 in Faber, *Strafrechtspleging en criminaliteit te Amsterdam, 1680–1811: de nieuwe menslievendheid* (Arnhem: Gouda Quint, 1983), 80. Herman Roodenburg discovered that only nine cases came before the Amsterdam Reformed Church disciplinary council between 1578 and 1700, none of which were decided in favor of the women who asserted that rape was the cause of their out-of-wedlock pregnancies. *Onder Censuur: De kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578–1700* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), 302. Van der Heijden found that in Rotterdam and Delft, men who assaulted married women got off with a reprimand and that in these cases, no force or violence was recorded. Van der Heijden, "Women As Victims," 623–644. Kloek reports only two cases of rape in the Leiden Confessieboeken between 1678 and 1794. In both cases the men charged received only light punishment. Kloek, "Criminaliteit en sexe," 155.

wrongdoing: was the female married or single, violated inside or outside her home, was she sexually experienced or a virgin, had she reached the age of sexual maturity, and was there clear evidence of violence done to her? They would also implicitly consider her social status and that of her attacker. In spite of the abundance of rape stories that circulated outside of courts and the disgust they inspired, secular and church courts did little to punish the perpetrators of this crime.

Plan of the Book

This book reveals the ways that depictions of rape shaped the young Dutch society and state over the course of the seventeenth century and molded the contours of men and women's lives. It examines few historically documented cases of rape, but instead emphasizes the many instances in which literary geniuses, well-known artists, priests, ministers, and educated women employed narratives of rape to foster specific social, political, and religious goals. Not many of the ideas this book highlights have discrete beginning and end points, and some extend prior to 1609 and continue past 1725. However, it is possible to discern a number of fundamental developments over the course of this long seventeenth century. By studying rape in the context of the seventeenth-century Netherlands, my aims are: 1) to expose the fact that rape functioned to reinforce the Dutch state; 2) to shed light on the Dutch experience of patriotism, patriarchy, the Reformation, Counter Reformation, and the construction of masculinity and femininity; and 3) to explore the implications of rape discourse on the lives of Dutch women and men. In addition, I hope that the less familiar, early modern perspective may facilitate the reader's recognition of—and the refutation of—enduring rape myths and thereby offer clues as to how we may eradicate rape in the future.

The first section of this book focuses on the first half of the seventeenth century to illuminate the way influential men employed images of rape to encourage political cohesion and galvanize a Calvinist social hierarchy that benefited powerful patriarchs. To introduce the nuanced social and political implications of rape, the current chapter provides a brief survey of the social, religious, and political upheavals the inhabitants of the Netherlands faced at the end of the sixteenth century, the nature of Dutch social hierarchy and the influence of Calvinist ideas of patriarchy, and the various ambiguous understandings of rape. Chapter two features preeminent playwright Joost van den Vondel's (1587–1679) literary masterpiece, the *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*, and proposes that this play, which opened the

Amsterdam Theater in 1638, served as a critique of Spanish tyranny. This chapter reveals that Vondel reached back to the propaganda of the 1560s and the 1570s for this play's inspiration and repeated stories of victimization to vilify the Spanish enemy and justify the Dutch uprising against their erstwhile King Philip II. Vondel succeeded in employing stories of rape not only to symbolize the way the Spanish violated the political and personal rights of their victims, but also to signify the Spanish violation of their religious rights. This play thus used dramatic scenes of rape to both inspire the inhabitants of the United Provinces to vehemently fight off their Spanish enemy and to encourage an intense patriotism and pride in Dutch moral fortitude.

Chapter three closely examines Protestant moralist Jacob Cats' (1577–1660) immensely popular advice manuals, which he wrote to teach Dutch men and women how to apply Reformed doctrine to their everyday lives and to dutifully accept their positions in the social hierarchy. Adapting the advice of a particular group of Reformed ministers who advocated strict piety for all, Cats included many stories of rape in his books to teach how to best repair human mistakes. These stories promoted Cats' aim of stabilizing the social system that privileged the wealthy over the poor, men over women, parents over children, and married men and women over unmarried men and women. On the one hand, Cats domesticated rape by making it seem like just another way for the rich and powerful to attain a wife. On the other hand, he expanded the group of people susceptible to charges of rape to include poor men, young adults who married without their parents' consent, and women deemed sexually aggressive.

The second section of the book exposes a trend initiated by two marginalized groups that have earlier roots, but intensified after mid-century. These groups employed the same veiled language as Vondel and Cats, but instead of using stories of rape to buttress the power of patriarchs and politicians, they utilized them to dispute the social hierarchies that powerful men such as Vondel and Cats helped to construct. Chapter four focuses on the challenges Catholic priests presented to the official Calvinist policies of the Dutch Republic. Although the Dutch Revolt could not have succeeded without the support of Catholics who were willing to ally themselves with the Protestant rebels in order to remove Spanish troops from the Netherlands and protect traditional civic privileges, by 1573 the rebels had abandoned the policy of religious coexistence.[109] From

[109] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520–1635* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2. Israel, 361.

that point on, Calvinist authorities treated Catholics with more suspicion than other religious groups due in part to their possible allegiance to the Habsburg enemy; they began to exclude Catholics from public office, and they occasionally prosecuted and deported Dutch priests. By 1581, the Dutch government had closed all cloisters and confiscated ecclesiastical property.[110]

The few clergy members who remained in or returned to the Republic during the late sixteenth century had to rely on the Catholic laity to open their homes as hidden churches, to conceal priests and sacred objects from the authorities, fund endowments, and bribe local officials.[111] To ensure the continuation of Catholic pastoral services in the Dutch Republic, members of the laity also dedicated their lives to their faith; young laymen chose to become priests and young laywomen chose to become Spiritual Virgins, or "*kloppen*," living a religious lifestyle outside cloisters.[112] The priestly directors of these religious women made it clear that they did not have to follow the advice given to ordinary women. Although Spiritual Virgins followed stricter behavioral guidelines, priests empowered them to fearlessly leave their homes to preach, teach, and take care of the needy by instructing them that they had the power to fend off attackers. The Dutch-speaking clergy's willingness to grant these women the exceptional power of fighting off sexual attack helped ensure the survival of Catholicism in the Dutch Republic.

Bisschop Valentinus and Willem Schoenius are two examples of priests who admonished a few spiritual Catholic women living in the "Holland Mission" to fight back and even kill men who threatened to rape them. This radical advice, prompting religious women to violent action, empowered the Spiritual Virgins to be fearless as they left their homes to spread their faith among Protestant "unbelievers" of the Dutch Republic. Spiritual Virgins thus became potent symbols of the superior efficacy of Catholicism

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[110] Benjamin Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines: Confession and Community in Utrecht, 1578–1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 11–12.

[111] Many priests and bishops fled after the proscriptions on Catholic worship beginning in the 1570s. One estimate claimed that there were only seventy priests in the entire United Provinces in 1600. Charles H. Parker, "Cooperative confessionalisation: lay-clerical collaboration in Dutch Catholic communities during the Golden Age," in *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c. 1570–1720*, ed. Benjamin Kaplan, Bob Moore, Van Nierop, and Pollmann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 17.

[112] Parker, 26. Maurit Monteiro, *Geestelijke maagden: leven tussen klooster en wereld in Noord-Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996).

to transform weak and fleshly women into superheroines of the Counter Reformation.[113]

Well-to-do, literate women, such as Johanna Coomans (1580/85–1659), Catharina Questiers (1630–1669), and Katharina Lescaije (1649–1711), also challenged the social and political implications of hegemonic rape discourse during the second half of the seventeenth century. Chapter five begins to reconstruct Dutch women's political self-identification—a topic long overlooked in part because of the assumption that since women could not hold public office in the Republic, their actions and affiliations had no bearing on politics. Other scholars have highlighted the handful of early modern Dutch women renowned for their public roles in religious riots and in the struggle against Spain, such as Neel Spaens, who provided iconoclasts with tools in 1566, Keanu Hasselaer, who led female troops in defense of Haarlem, and the early eighteenth-century Maria van Antwerpen, who lived and fought as a soldier.[114] In surprising numbers, literate Dutch women also entered public debate through their published interactions with the intellectual trends of their day.

Similar to their male counterparts, literary women frequently identified themselves as loyal supporters of their fatherland and they supported the male moralists' perception of women as weak and sinful. However, they refuted men's claims that women were responsible for preventing rape by squarely placing the blame upon men. Moreover, these women expanded their definition of punishable sexual offenses to include not only sexual attack, but also seduction and false promises of marriage. Remarkably, women wrote vehement poems justifying violent retribution against rapists and occasionally offered direct challenges to learned men without damaging their friendships with the latter. In their political poetry,

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[113] Historians debate the usefulness of the term "Counter Reformation" to describe the period of Catholic revival in the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries. I follow Pollmann's lead that in the context of the early modern Netherlands, "Counter Reformation" is very suitable (Pollmann, xvi). For the contours of this debate see R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[114] Marybeth Carlson, "Women in and out of the public church in the Dutch Republic," in *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds*, ed. Susan Dinan and Debra Meyers (New York: Routledge, 2001); Rudolph Dekker, "Women in Revolt: Popular Protest and Its Social Basis in Holland in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Theory and Society* 16 (1987): 337–62; Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 418; Els Kloek, *Kenau: de heldhaftige zakenvrouw uit Haarlem, 1526–1588* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001); Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol, *Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

literary women employed alternative metaphors for the vulnerable nation that emphasized the common humanity and weakness of both men and women, rather than the susceptibility of women to physical and sexual attack.

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Rape metaphors have long proved useful in justifying political upheavals, subordinating certain members of the population, and instigating a fierce hatred of invading armies. Consider, for instance, the particularly vivid, and more recent use of this imagery during World War I. British propaganda offices designated the German offensive the "rape of Belgium" and churned out propaganda that depicted Germans as raping both women and neutral Belgian territory figured as female. Modern propagandists harnessed the power of rape to motivate the Allied soldiers and citizenry to fight, to present the battle as a struggle against obvious forces of evil, to obscure the initial eagerness for war felt throughout Europe, and to prompt an impulsive hatred of all things German among the Allies.

What is significant in the seventeenth-century Dutch deployment of rape discourse is not only its pervasiveness, but also the tendency to use depictions of rape to create both an evil enemy and a poignant pride in the Dutch character and society. As is frequently the case, Dutch authors and artists used rape to inspire the citizenry to rise up and fight as one cohesive entity; distinctively, they also used stories of rape to marvel at their own godly morality based on Dutch men's willingness to honor and protect their wives and daughters and on Dutch women's desire to protect their own chastity. Therefore, when we conjure the romantic depictions of the seventeenth-century Dutch as prudish, frugal, meticulous, and industrious, stories of rape may seem out of place. However, it is the seventeenth-century Dutch authors' and artists' preoccupation with creating a godly society populated by married couples that fuelled this fixation. Rape discourse proved to be the ideal means through which the Dutch could propagate ideas about proper marriages—the bedrock of the civilization they aspired to build.

CHAPTER TWO

PATRIOTIC PROPAGANDA

On January 3, 1638, the beautiful, baroque Amsterdam Theater opened with Joost van den Vondel's tragedy *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*. It was a long-awaited inauguration. Some of the city's Calvinist ministers, who disapproved of the play's seemingly Catholic content, delayed its opening for over a week. When it finally did play, the audience of about a thousand people sat in tiered sections according to their social status and filled the middle standing-room-only section.[1]

On the long, narrow stage before them paraded gorgeous, contemporary costumes despite the medieval setting of the play. Trumpets and war drums sounded and banners waved. The wooden interior, painted to look like marble, provided excellent acoustics. Mute and motionless actors created intricate *tableaux vivants* to accompany the many long monologues. It was as if the players formed transitory, staged paintings in which dark figures were illuminated by shafts of light reminiscent of Rembrandt's "Nightwatch" (1642); many in fact conjecture that the artist's viewing of the *Gijsbrecht* inspired this famous painting.[2]

The climactic scene of this production arrived in the fifth act. In a horrific bloodbath, Witte van Haamstee, a soldier invading medieval Amsterdam, rapes and murders Claris van Velzen, a noblewoman, nun, and the title character's niece, on the corpse of her uncle, the bishop. A messenger describes her rape and murder:

> . . . she swoons. But before she comes to, Haamstee throws her on her uncle's lifeless body, Defiles her, satisfies his sacrilegious lust. She comes to at last, aware of this heinous act, And cries: "My Spouse, look down, and see my suffering, And how I've been abused. Oh pure Virgin Mary! Oh Clara, do you see? Machteld, behold your child!" That pitiless man ignores her laments, her tears—Neither does the buzzard heed the harmless dove that squeaks/ When in mid-flight he digs his claws in its soft flesh. "Away," he growls, "weep out your heart to your mother."

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[1] B. Albach, "De Schouwburg van Jacob van Campen," *Oud Holland* 85 (1970): 85–109.

[2] See Joost van den Vondel, *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*, trans. Kristiaan Aercke (Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse, Inc., 1991), 9–10. See also H. van de Waal, *Rembrandt at Vondel's Tragedy Gijsbreght van Aemstel* (Amsterdam: Miscellanea J.Q. van Regteren Altena, 1969), 145–149.

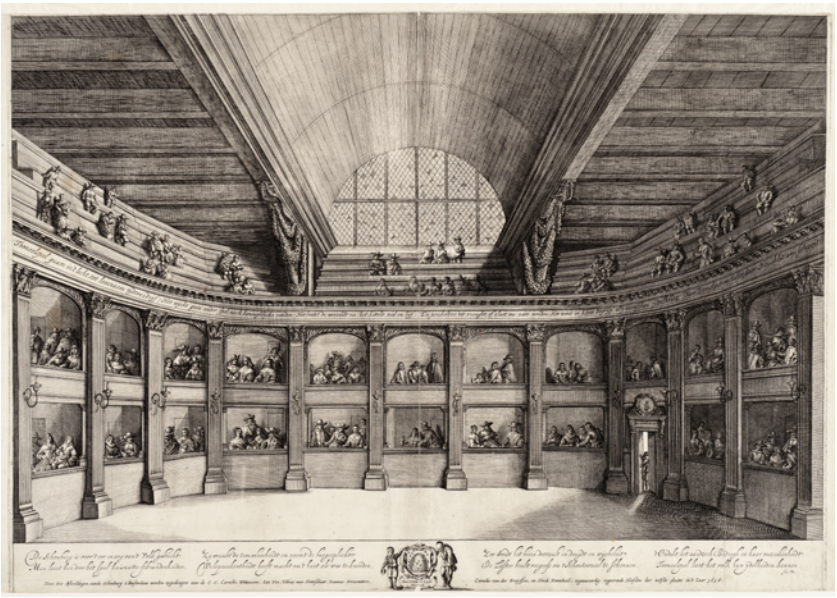

Plate 3. S. Savry, The Former Schouwburg on Keizersgracht 384. Seen from the stage (1658). Amsterdam Stadsarchief; Collectie Atlas.

Plate 4. S. Savry, The Former Schouwburg on Keizersgracht 384. Seen facing the stage (1658). Amsterdam Stadsarchief; Collectie Atlas.

> He kicks her belly, tramples on her suffering heart, Until her nose and mouth release a spurt of blood. With a final gasp, she closes her starry eyes, Expiring as if asleep in the bishop's open arms.[3]

As if this was not appalling enough, Claris' uncle's murder and her own rape and murder take place in the midst of an array of slain nuns large enough to encircle the pair.

Far from dooming the play to failure, the *Gijsbrecht*, with its dramatic scenes of rape and murder, was incredibly well received and is still perhaps the most famous of all Dutch plays. It ran thirteen times during its first season, 121 times before its author's death in 1679, and every Christmas season from 1641 until 1969.[4] At each premier and reopening, Amsterdam presses produced printed editions of the play, making it available to an even wider audience. Considering the cost of performances, it is not unlikely that many ordinary laborers were able to join the ranks of the well-to-do in attending these spectacles.[5] The *Gijsbrecht's* extraordinary popularity in print and on stage indicates that its content resonated with audiences and its wide dissemination ensured that it exerted a sizable cultural impact in the United Provinces.

Vondel's choice of rape as subject matter for the opening of the Amsterdam Theater was not incidental. This chapter argues that Vondel's play, set in the Middle Ages, is a thinly veiled critique of Spanish tyranny during the Dutch Revolt. Like so much anti-Spanish propaganda written in the seventy years between the outbreak of hostilities and the staging of this play, Vondel used stories of victimization to vilify the Spanish enemy and thereby more clearly delineate a Dutch people. In the *Gijsbrecht*, Vondel tapped into the stock images of villains and heroes developed during the early years of the Revolt in order to transform the complex, on-going

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[3] Vondel, 107.

[4] Aercke, Introduction *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*, by Vondel, 9.

[5] On the audience and developments in Dutch drama see Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Het Nederlandse Renaissancetoneel* (Utrecht: HES Uitgevers, 1991). Jacob Adolf Worp, *Geschiedenis van het drama en van het tooneel in Nederland*: Deel 1 (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1904), 83–87. George W. Brandt and Wiebe Hogendoorn, *German and Dutch Theatre, 1600–1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 350, 359–60. Angela Vanhaelen, *Comic Print and Theatre in Early Modern Amsterdam: Gender, Childhood and the City* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), chapter one. See also Schama's appendices for some comparative prices of bread and labor at mid-century. For a fuller assessment of earning power of skilled laborers, sailors, fishermen and others see A.Th. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), part I.

struggle against Spain into a clear-cut battle between two natural enemies: Dutch patriots and evil tyrants. In this seminal play, the crime of rape functions as a detestable symbol of the Spanish violation of families, religious freedoms, and political privilege. Vondel recognized the potency of rape as the ultimate evil act that could inspire the inhabitants of the Dutch Republic to focus solely on their need to expel the Spanish and consequently overlook the multitude of religious, political, linguistic, and ethnic differences that threatened to dismantle the new Dutch state.

Dutch Identity

Dutch nation building was a precarious, arduous, and drawn-out affair. The United Provinces of the Netherlands was an unexpected consequence of the struggle that broke out in 1566 when noblemen and townspeople of the Low Countries challenged their Spanish king's religious policies. The Habsburg ruler Charles V had only succeeded in combining the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries with the Pragmatic Sanction in 1549. By 1585, his son, Philip II, although successful in regaining control of the southern provinces, faced the continuing rebellion of a significant section of the northern part of this territory. The new republic of the seven northern provinces of the Low Countries owed its existence to this complex struggle, identified with the benefit of hindsight as the Dutch Revolt.

Although an expedient abbreviation for the struggle that set off eighty years of war with Spain, this designation suggests a "Dutch" people existed from the beginning of this conflict when, in fact, it did not. The people of the Low Countries might have identified themselves and their culture as "Netherlandish" but this included the people of the southern provinces, subject once again to the Hapsburgs after 1585. They more frequently identified themselves with their city or province as their use of the word "nation" frequently indicates; they saw themselves as members of the "*natio*" of Friesland, Holland, or Amsterdam.[6] There was no Netherlandish nationality; By law one's nationality was determined by the province

[6] "Natio" could express many smaller affiliations as well. Members of a particular "natio" could be a group of guild members, people from a certain neighborhood, people of a particular socio-economic class or religious affiliation, or even a group of students studying in a foreign country. See S. Groenveld, *Verlopend Getij: de Nederlandse Republiek en de Engelse Burgeroorlog, 1640–1646* (Dieren: Bataafsche Leeuw, 1984), 16.

into which one was born.[7] To complicate this mélange of identity even further, there were large groups of immigrants from the southern provinces of the Low Countries and elsewhere within the booming cities of Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, and Delft, who did not assimilate into their new societies for well over a generation.[8] Throughout the Low Countries were groups of people who claimed distinct ethno-cultural definitions, different dialects and languages, contradictory political goals, and diverse religious beliefs.[9]

Late sixteenth-century developments altered this complex situation. The United Provinces' sudden status as an independent political unit and a world power, its growing merchant class, exceptionally high rate of literacy, and an explosion of printed sources in the Dutch language (*Nederlands*) collaborated to inspire a newer national identity to spring up alongside more local identities.[10] Several groups were particularly involved in the manufacture of this Dutch (*Nederlandsche*) identity. Newly empowered republican leaders consciously sought to bolster the popular support of the new state. They included the prince of Orange, noblemen, and administrators, a number of whom returned to the Low

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[7] Alastair Duke, "Patriotism and Liberty in the Low Countries, 1555–1576," in *Networks, Regions, and Nations*, ed. Stein and Pollmann, 221–222.

[8] Roughly 100,000 Flemings, Brabanders, and Wallonians moved north between the Fall of Antwerp in 1585 and 1620 for the sake of religious freedom or for economic opportunities. Robert B. Howell, "The Low Countries: A Study in Sharply Contrasting Nationalisms" in *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, ed. Stephen Barbour and Cathie Carmichael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 141.

[9] See Duke, "The Elusive Netherlands: The Question of Nation Identity in the Early Modern Low Countries on the Eve of Revolt," *Bijdragen en Mededeling voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 119 (2004): 10–38.

[10] The precise nature of pre-modern collective identity is a topic of considerable debate. While so-called "modernists," including E.J. Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson, consider nationalism to be a product of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many historians of the medieval and early modern periods, including Robert Stein and Peter Hoppenbrouwers, believe that "forms of allegiance to one's peers, to the government or prince and to the land, are of all times, and should be considered as a form of common and even national identity…" (Stein, Introduction, in *Networks, Regions, and Nations*, 5). Hoppenbrouwers contends that the long-term development of nations and nationalisms is "a complex, non-linear process" (Hoppenbrouwers, "The Dynamics of National Identity in the Late Middle Ages" in *Networks, Regions, and Nations*, 29). He characterizes the difference between modern and pre-modern experiences of nationalism as one of degree, thus claiming that pre-modern feelings lack the "comprehensiveness of 'total' social support that characterizes modern nationalism" (Hoppenbrouwers, 27). See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1983), Eric Hobsbawm *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and Ernest Gellner *Nations and Nationalism* (Itaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

Countries after initially fleeing Spanish retribution in the late 1560s. Using the language of German patriotic constitutionalism developed in the 1530s and 1540s, William of Orange and his associates stimulated the growth of this supra-provincial identity through the production of propaganda beginning in 1567.[11] By the 1570s, a variety of authors who identified themselves as "patriots"—a term which came to mean "someone whose first loyalty was to the *patria* . . . someone who opposed Spanish tyranny and defended the privileges of the fatherland"—took up the cause.[12] Many of these self-styled patriots were wealthy merchant and industrial capitalists, forced from the southern provinces by religious intolerance. They strove for greater Dutch cohesion in hopes that this might expel the Spanish from their native provinces and allow them to return home. Also among the proponents of Dutch identity and a love of the fatherland were many Calvinists who hoped the Republic could defeat Spain and thereby ensure their continued freedom from Catholic Habsburg rule.

Vondel should be counted among these patriotic authors dedicated to inspiring Dutch solidarity. As a member of the well-educated, merchant elite—a sizable and politically powerful group in the United Provinces—he had sufficient reason to promote loyalty to the state simply to preserve his powerful position in it. However, as a fervently devout Christian, Vondel had ample spiritual incentive as well. Raised by Anabaptist parents who had migrated from Antwerp to Amsterdam via Cologne, he had experienced first-hand the implications of religious intolerance. Vondel's underlying goals in the *Gijsbrecht* were to ensure the prosperity and survival of the new nation and to inspire the Dutch people to champion a more tolerant, less sectarian form of Christian devotion.

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[11] Robert von Friedeburg, "In Defense of Patria: Resisting Magistrates and the Duties of Patriots in the Empire from the 1530s to the 1640s," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 32 (2001): 357–382. See especially pp. 369–370 on William of Orange's theoretic situation within these debates about the right to self-defense according to the law of nature.

[12] Duke, "In Defense of the Common Fatherland. Patriotism and Liberty in the Low Countries, 1555–1576" in *Networks, Regions, and Nations*, 218. Stein defines *patria* as "more politicized, more inclusive, and more all-encompassing [than the concept of nation]. It not only refers to the love for one's fatherland, but also to the obligations arising from this love. The word *patria* was used frequently in ancient and medieval texts as a more or less factual indication of the town—or land—where one was born. From the fourteenth century, both in Germany and the Low Countries, it was increasingly used as a reference to one's emotional fatherland, and from the late sixteenth century onwards the concept of *patria* really expanded and 'patriot' became a common term." Stein in *Networks, Regions, and Nations*, 11.

These diverse patriotic impulses did not result in a single, monolithic form of collective identity. Rather, expressions of identity were malleable, dynamic, and constantly reinvented to attain new goals.[13] Ascribing to a Dutch identity did not preclude local and regional attachments. Rather this designation flourished alongside alternative forms of collective identity as evinced by the fact that the seventeenth century witnessed a boom in municipal chronicles, as well as national and provincial histories.[14] Further, much of the impetus for a broader identification originated from the culturally preeminent province of Holland.[15] As this study of Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* demonstrates, even while focusing on the greatness of Amsterdam and Holland, patriotic authors attempted to entice the wider population of the United Provinces to celebrate the successes and distinct characteristics of the Dutch people by sketching them in universally attractive terms.

Dutch Literary Offensive

Newly enriched, educated, and empowered citizens such as Vondel engaged in a kind of cultural offensive to enhance this budding Dutch consciousness. The necessary first step was to write pamphlets, histories, and patriotic plays with a broader appeal by standardizing and aesthetically improving the Dutch language. Although the vernacular had gained ground due to the Reformation's emphasis on writing and preaching in languages uneducated people understood, at the end of the sixteenth century a wide variety of Dutch dialects continued to co-exist, there was no systematic spelling, and even variations of the name of the language endured.[16] Dutch also encountered strong competition from French, the

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[13] Stein, 13; Groenveld, 22–25.

[14] Charles H. Parker, "To the Attentive, Nonpartisan Reader: The Appeal to History and National Identity in the Religious Disputes of the Seventeenth-Century Netherlands," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997): 61.

[15] See Benjamin Kaplan, "Dutch Religious Tolerance: Celebration and Revision," in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. Hsia and Van Nierop (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17. For the preponderance of images of Holland and the limits of a unified feeling of patriotism see Marijke Meijer Drees, "Patriottisme in de Nederlandse literatuur (ca. 1650–ca. 1750)," *Nieuwe Taalgids: Tijdschrift Voor Neerlandici* 88 (1995): 247–260.

[16] Howell in *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, 131.

language of the Brussels and stadholders' courts, and Latin, the language of European intellectuals.[17]

Beginning in the 1580s, however, the Dutch language became the language of freedom and pride. By 1582, the States General decided to publish its documents in Dutch. In 1584 and 1585, members of the Amsterdam chamber of rhetoric, the Eglantier, published Dutch grammar and logic books in an effort to promote the use of Dutch at Leiden University.[18] Although French remained an important language in the States General's discussions and the Eglantier's attempt to replace Latin with Dutch among professors failed in part because it would have made courses less attractive to foreign students, their efforts prompted many others to standardize Dutch and demonstrate its literary capacities. This new pride in the Dutch language, combined with Renaissance-inspired developments in literature, ensured that the patriotic propaganda of this era took on a relatively learned cast echoing the literary taste of a growing educated population.[19]

Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* is a primary example of this kind of conscious effort to inspire pride in Dutch language and history. Although he was initially a member of a competing chamber in Amsterdam called "Het Wit Lavendel," Vondel met and corresponded with a much wider group of Dutch intellectuals. He took part, for instance, in the sporadic gatherings of a collection of learned friends at the castle of Muiden, not far from Amsterdam, at the invitation of author and statesman, P.C. Hooft, who lived there as a bailiff between 1609 and 1647.[20] The impressive list of intellectuals who appeared at Hooft's behest included internationally renowned jurist Hugo Grotius (who attended until he was imprisoned in 1618), Constantijn Huygens, G.A. Bredero, and Maria Tesselschade Visscher.

It is likely in the context of these meetings that Vondel became inspired by Hooft's literary talent, and thus wrote his famous *Gijsbrecht van*

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[17] M.J. van der Wal, *De Moedertaal Centraal: Standardisatie-aspecten in de Nederlanden omstreeks 1650. Nederlandse Cultuur in Europese Context* (Sdu Uitgevers, The Hague, 1995), 24. Jan W. de Vries and Roland Willemyns, *Het Verhaal van een Taal, negen eeuwen Nederlands* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1993), 57.

[18] Wal, 36–38. The Eglantier is also known by its motto 'In Liefde Bloeyende.' The first printed Dutch grammar was *Twe-spraak van de Nederduytsche letterkunst* (1584) and the following book on logic was *Ruygh-bewerp vande Redenkavelingh* (1585).

[19] Wal, 38–41.

[20] P.G. Witsen Geysbeek, *Biographisch anthologisch en critisch woordenboek der Nederduitsche dichters*. Vol. 3 HAE-IPE (C.L. Schleijer, Amsterdam 1822), 238–239.

Amstel as a sequel to Hooft's popular play, *Geeraerdt van Velzen* (1613).[21] The castle where they met likely inspired both poets to popularize the history of the medieval lords for whom their respective plays are named. According to Hooft and Vondel, it was in the castle of Muiden that Gijsbrecht and Geeraerdt imprisoned Floris V, Count of Holland, to avenge Floris' rape of Geeraerdt's wife Machteld. Hooft's *Geeraerdt van Velzen* focuses on the play's namesake's inability to control his anger after Floris raped Machteld. Instead of allowing other forces to deal legally with Floris' crime, as his cousin Gijsbrecht suggests, Geeraerdt murders him. Vondel's *Gijsbrecht van Amstel* focuses on the later consequences of Count Floris' murder. In Vondel's story, Gijsbrecht tries in vain to fend off Floris' allies, including his bastard son, Witte van Haamstee, who seeks retribution for the murder of the Count.

Not only did both Hooft and Vondel choose to recount this episode of rape from the annals of Netherlandish history, but they also forced this dramatic story to fit classical molds. By doing so, the authors demonstrated that the Dutch language was as great as any language and could handle the history of antiquity, and proved that as Renaissance playwrights they were capable of using classical and medieval allegories to teach contemporary lessons.[22] Hooft's story recalls the rape of Lucretia recounted most fully by Livy in which Lucretia's husband, Collatinus, and his ally, Brutus, avenge her by overthrowing the raping tyrant, Sextus Tarquinius. Collatinus and Brutus thus institute the new Roman Republic, but fail to create lawful, warless rule.[23] Hooft's tragedy is a commentary on the difficulty of re-instituting peace and order after overthrowing a tyrant—a situation the Republic found itself in during the discordant truce period when Hooft wrote this play.[24]

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[21] In the Amsterdam Theater, Hooft's *Geeraerdt* played fifty-four times between 1642 and 1664. Smits-Veldt, 108–9. According to H. Duits, Hooft's *Geeraerdt* played in 1628 and 1637, and likely in 1630 as well. See H. Duits, *Van Bartholomeusnacht tot Bataafse Opstand: Studies over de relatie tussen politiek en toneel in het midden van de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), 24 fn 53.

[22] John Prudhoe, "Joost van den Vondel: The Dramatic Technique of Gysbreght van Aemstel and Lucifer considered as a Contribution to World Tragedy," *Modern Language Review* 51 (1956): 558. E.O.C. Mulier, "Grotius, Hooft, and the Writing of Dutch Historiography," in *Clio's Mirror: Historiography in Britain and the Netherlands: Papers Delivered to the Eighth Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference*, ed. Duke and C.A. Tamse (Zutphen, Netherlands: De Walburg Pers, 1985), 63, 68.

[23] Livy, I, 57–60.

[24] Duits, 27–28. In addition to echoing the Roman precedent, Hooft ties Machteld's rape to Lucretia's by specifically mentioning Brutus' "praiseworthy punishment" of the "evil lusts" of those with regal ancestry. He also connects Brutus with Geeraerdt van

Vondel modeled his story on the history of the Trojan War recounted in Virgil's *Aeneid*. In Vondel's "Prelude" to the *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*, he connected the fall of Gijsbrecht's Amsterdam with the fall of Troy and he listed which Greek parts the medieval characters play. Machteld's rape, like that of Helen's, instigates the battle and fuels the subsequent destruction of the city. Vondel modeled Gijsbrecht on the heroic Aeneas known for his "piety, personal virtue, faithfulness to gods, country and family, simplicity, and courage."[25] Witte, the illegitimate son of Floris, rages like Pyrrhus and the nuns, including Claris, "play Cassandra's part."[26]

In addition to pointing out the character parallels, Vondel also takes great liberties with the medieval history of Amsterdam in order to adapt easily recognizable details from Virgil's history. The most obvious example of this is the incorporation of the Trojan horse into the destruction of Amsterdam. In Vondel's play, the invading forces make it look like they have given up the siege and left behind a ship of reeds. The inhabitants of Amsterdam, celebrating their apparent victory as well as Christmas, bring the ship inside the city walls to use its fuel and of course, as in Virgil's *Aeneid,* with it they bring its cargo of hidden soldiers.

Vondel's *Gijsbrecht*, written in a newly standardized, aestheticized Dutch and employing classical allegory and complex symbolism, marks the apex of a literary cultural offensive. Using these techniques, Vondel and many other authors successfully invented new traditions for the people of the United Provinces and proposed that the Dutch people had an age-old national temperament.[27] As this chapter progresses, it will become apparent that Dutch authors frequently make reference to ancient custom and tradition to provide brand new republican structures with the fictive legitimacy of established practice.

Velzen through their similar failure to create order out of disorder. The latter asks: "Who can . . . bring order to a state if the highest ruler leads in an immoderate manner?" and Herman van Woerden responds: "Neither the first nor the second Brutus managed it" (Hooft, 84–5, lines 753–6). The "second Brutus" Hooft refers to is Marcus Junius Brutus who claimed descent from this Brutus and later murders Julius Caesar. P.C. Hooft, *Geeraerdt van Velsen* (Zutphen, Netherlands: W.J. Thieme & Cie, 1976), 78, lines 649–651. This edition can be found online through the DBNL (Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren) at http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/hoofoo1geero1_01/index.php.

[25] Vondel, 33.

[26] Vondel, 57, line 24.

[27] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Propaganda, the Dutch Revolt, and the Gijsbrecht

By 1638, due to the widespread popularity of Renaissance symbolism and allegory and the seventy-year-old habit of viewing the Spanish as vicious enemies, the audience of the *Gijsbrecht* would have immediately recognized the onstage villains as stand-ins for their contemporary foe. To reinforce this connection, Vondel drew heavily from the rich imagery of tyranny, victimization, and righteous opposition that propagandists of the Revolt had developed since the conflict erupted in 1567.[28] Scattered throughout the play are reverberations of arguments earlier authors and artists made to justify the uprising. Thus, to fully appreciate how this famous play adopts these images, we must examine how some of the most influential prints, pamphlets, and histories of the Revolt defined the enemies, the heroes, and the reasons for fighting.[29] A brief examination of this early anti-Spanish propaganda reveals that during the period from 1567 to 1637 the most reviled enemy shifted from the Duke of Alba to King Philip II to the invading Spanish troops. However, as the *Gijsbrecht* demonstrates, one can always identify evil enemies through their tendency to disrespect traditional rights and mistreat innocent people.

The greatest share of the propaganda released during the early years of the Dutch Revolt directed the blame not on the king of Spain, but on the cruel tyranny of Don Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, 3rd Duke of Alba. In 1567, he arrived in the Low Countries on behalf of King Philip II to harshly punish those responsible for the 1566 Nobles Petition (which threatened rebellion unless the inhabitants of the Low Countries were afforded

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[28] Duits points out that several of Vondel's plays were historical dramas in which Vondel makes use of "national" material and places his work in the context of other authors of patriotic historical drama, such as Daniel Heinsius, Hooft, and Gijsbrecht van Hogendorps. See Duits, 27–34. See also 156–163 for Duits' assessment of Vondel's opinions of William I and later members of the house of Orange. Marco Prandoni makes the case that Vondel uses William of Orange as the model for his character Gijsbrecht based on his comparison of Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* with Hogendorp's *Truer-spel*, a play on the 1584 murder of the prince of Orange that opened the Amsterdam Academy twenty years before the opening of the Amsterdam Theater. Prandoni, *Een mozaïek van stemmen: verbeeldend lezen in Vondels Gysbreght van Aemstel* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2007), 149–156. Smits-Veldt also recognizes the political function of several tragedies and states that in Hooft's *Geeraert van Velzen* the rebellion against Floris V parallels the Dutch Revolt. Smits-Veldt, 72–3.

[29] For more on the early symbolism of the Dutch Revolt see Arnade, especially chapter 6; J. Tanis and D. Horst, *Images of Discord. A Graphic Interpretation of the Opening Decades of the Eighty Years' War* (Bryn Mawr College Library: Philadelphia, Penn., 1993); D. Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit* (Walburg Pers: Zutphen, 2003); and P.A.M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse opstand in de pamfletten, 1566–1584* (Nijmegen: Centrale Drukkerij, 1956).

greater religious toleration) and the ensuing iconoclastic violence. To achieve this end, Alba instituted the Council of Troubles, notorious for sentencing around 9,000 persons accused of treason and/or heresy and executing roughly 1,000 of those who did not flee the country to avoid their hearings. These numbers included the shocking executions of Lamoraal, Count of Egmont and Philip of Montmorency, Count of Hornes, two leading Catholic nobles claiming loyalty to the king, as well as eighteen other nobles.[30]

In 1568 this council also condemned William of Orange, alienating and mobilizing the eventual leader of the rebellion. When Orange heard of his condemnation he simultaneously raised troops to attack Alba and populated his exiled court at Nassau-Dillenburg with highly skilled propagandists, realizing that half the battle would be to inspire the people of the Low Countries to follow his leadership. This group included a number of Protestant refugees, such as his secretary Marnix of St. Aldegonde, and Orange's court chaplain and once-advocate, Pierre Loyseleur de Villiers.[31] These exiled men in Orange's service and others who had fled Philip's harsh religious policies circulated a multitude of prints and pamphlets identifying Alba's crimes. Depictions of ghastly executions and the subsequent seizure of the condemned nobles' property served as well-understood shorthand for Alba's villainy.

Although Philip sent Alba to severely punish Protestant iconoclasts and nobles who dared challenge his authority, the Orangeist propagandists did not initially abjure the king. Instead, they espoused the idea that the responsibility for unjust treatment lay with the king's ministers and representatives. This is why in 1571 Orange proclaimed his devotion to the king while warning the latter that the duke had usurped his royal power:

> Alba, following the example of the tyrant Herod, took your royal chair, which had never before been touched by any stadholder, and covered it with a golden cloth, on which he, in your absence, sat like an idol in the crowded square of Antwerp, . . . all this in public contempt and to great damage to your Royal Majesty's honor and reputation.[32]

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[30] The total number of refugees fleeing Alba's justice is estimated at 60,000. Israel, 160.

[31] Israel, 161–2; See also *Willem van Oranje in de Historie 1584–1984: Vier eeuwen beeldvorming en geschiedschrijving*, ed. Mulier and A.E.M. Janssen (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1984), 10–12.

[32] Tanis and Horst, 30.

This was a sentiment widely shared by the time William wrote this letter and an apt description of the extremely influential anonymous 1569 print, *The Throne of the Duke of Alva*.[33] This engraving depicts a wide variety of the duke's tyrannical actions including his usurpation of the throne of the Spanish king, his order for the executions of Egmond and Hornes and many others taking place in the background, and his destruction of the traditional privileges of the Low Countries as denoted by the torn charters scattered at his feet.

The influential idea that the provinces of the Low Countries could temporarily suspend their duties and the services they owed Philip II due to Alba's tyranny—without severing their loyalty to the king—circulated widely in the 1560s and 1570s.[34] It was based on the belief that the inhabitants of the Netherlands had pledged their loyalty to Philip II (and others before him) on the condition that he respect the privileges diverse cities, guilds, clergy, and nobility had attained during the late medieval period. These privileges, documented in the Grand Privilege of 1477 and promised in public ceremonies such as the Joyous Entry of Brabant since 1356, did not apply to all the Low Countries, and yet, by the 1570s, many patriotic authors claimed that they did.[35] Orange's assertion of loyalty to the Spanish king despite the latter's failures was based upon provisions that appeared in both the Grand Privilege and the Joyous Entry, which maintained that the subjects had the temporary right to disobey a prince who violated his subjects' privileges.[36] It was by invoking these privileges as the universal heritage of the Low Countries that Orange and others justified their demands for the protection of civic rights, the restriction of central power, and political participation for certain members of the provinces and towns of the Low Countries.

Propagandists did not only evoke the late medieval constitutional heritage to defend noble and city rights; they also maintained that these traditional privileges extended to religious freedoms as well. As early as 1566, Jacob van Wesembeek, Catholic pensionary of Antwerp, long-time

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[33] Tanis and Horst discuss the first anonymous print of this theme from 1569, another anonymous version from 1570, and a 1622 version engraved by Willem Jacobszoon Delff after a drawing attributed to Adriaen Pietersz van de Venne, 50–53, 62–63. Tanis and Horst use the Dutch spelling of Alba's name.

[34] Horst and Tanis, 22.

[35] Duke, "In defense of the Common Fatherland," in *Networks, Regions, and Nations*, 227. E.H. Kossmann and A.F. Mellink, eds. *Texts Concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 87, 199, 209.

[36] Van Gelderen, *The Dutch Revolt*, viii–ix.

supporter of Orange, and opponent of religious persecution, asserted that the Netherlanders had always been exceptional lovers of freedom and the enemies of all violence and oppression. Both Wesembeek and Orange emphasized the religious component of this love of freedom, claiming that the Dutch were devoted to maintaining traditional religious freedoms due in part to their respect of custom and in part to a natural Netherlandish proclivity.[37] Although this understanding of Netherlandish privileges required a stretch of imagination, other authors seized upon this logic. By 1579, two anonymous pamphlets reinterpreted the oath sworn at the Joyous Entry that the Duke of Brabant would "do no violence to any person in any manner" to mean that he could do no harm to property, body, or soul, thus assuming that freedom of religion had been a part of Netherlandish heritage since 1356.[38]

Thus focusing their enmity on the Duke of Alba for his disrespect of traditional Netherlandish religious freedoms, political privileges, and his cruel mistreatment of Netherlandish peoples, Orange and his propagandists vilified Alba as a foreign tyrant. They issued a series of prints that catalogued the crimes and character flaws of Alba and pitted them against the virtues of William of Orange, creating a stock list of opposing characteristics from which Vondel freely drew upon to flesh out his characters in the *Gijsbrecht*. Taken as a whole, these prints emphasize Alba's excessive pride, greed, mistreatment of the Low Countries, bloodlust, and tendency to lie and, conversely, William's piety, humility, willingness to sacrifice his own well-being for the people, adherence to reason, and honor.[39]

Propagandists symbolically expressed Alba's mistreatment of innocent people in two additional ways—both of which resonate in Vondel's work. First, the propaganda suggests that the definition of a tyrant as someone who hurts innocent people is timeless, so biblical tyrants committed the same crimes as contemporary tyrants. William of Orange employed this logic in his association of Alba with the tyrant Herod, infamous for his

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[37] Kaplan, "'Dutch' Religious Tolerance: Celebration and Revision," in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*, 12. P.C. Molhuysen and P.J. Blok, *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek*. Vol. 5 (A.W. Sijthoff, Leiden 1921), 13–15.

[38] Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 10–11.

[39] The artists portrayed these characteristics as labeled personifications of a specific virtue or vice, as symbols on or near Alba or Orange, or through the events portrayed in the background. For example, in the 1569 *Emblematic Contrast of Orange and Alva*, the latter's greed is evident in the attendance of *Invidia* (envy) and the shears in the duke's hand signifying his desire to shave all the wealth from the Low Countries. Anonymous, ascribed to Theodore de Bry, engraving ca. 1570–1572, in Tanis and Horst, 76. For similar images see Tanis and Horst pp. 77, 81, 83 85, 87, 92, and 107.

slaying of innocent babies. Other prints recall the biblical story of Exodus, linking pharaoh's enslavement of the Israelites with Alba's subjugation of the Dutch Provinces, while simultaneously equating Moses and Orange because both lead their people to freedom. The contemporary viewers of this print would have easily understood this allegory since authors and artists frequently encouraged their Dutch audiences to consider themselves God's chosen people, like the biblical Israelites.[40]

Second, in many other prints, Alba's mistreatment of innocent people is depicted as an abuse of female figures that symbolize the provinces or the nation. For example, in the series of prints (mentioned above) entitled *The Throne of the Duke of Alva*, the duke chained seventeen maidens to his throne symbolizing his attempts to subjugate each of the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries. In yet other prints, the many provinces are reduced to one single woman, personifying "the nation of the Netherlands" (*die nacie van Nederlandt*) or "Belgica," whom Alba holds hostage.[41] The 1577 print attributed to Theodore de Bry, *Comparison of Orange and Alba with the Spanish Fury in the Background*, for example, depicts "Belgica" in chains behind Alba. This print not only signals tyranny through the mistreatment of vulnerable women, but it also points out that Alba served as the symbol for all Spanish tyranny during the late 1570s. Although Alba had returned to Spain three years prior to the outbreak of the military violence that erupted in Antwerp in 1576, referred to as the Spanish Fury, this print depicts Alba as the author of those atrocities. These early prints laid the foundation for later propaganda that uses rape and infanticide to signal a tyrant's willingness to abuse innocent peoples.

Propaganda 1581–1609

By 1581 the intense feelings of enmity shifted from Alba to the king of Spain. Although the States General contemplated disavowing the king as early as 1575 and by 1579 the signatories of the Union of Utrecht had laid

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[40] Willem Frihoff, "Religious Toleration in the United Provinces: From 'case' to 'model'" in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*, 71–2; See also Schama's section on patriotic scripture. Schama, 93–125.

[41] For example, in the 1572 anonymous print, *Zinneprint met de vergelijking tussen Oranje en Alva*, a naked woman is the personification of "die nacie van Nederlant." See Horst, 137. See also Hans Collaert de Oude, *Weeklacht van de Verscheurde Nederlanden*. See Horst, 180. See Duke, "Elusive Netherlands" for explanation of the designation of Belgica, 17–18.

the foundation of the republic comprised of the northern provinces, it was only with the 1581 Act of Abjuration that there was a very clear break with the king of Spain. From this point on Dutch officials no longer swore an oath to the king but to the States General, Philip's image was removed from all coins minted in the north, and his name was removed from documents and buildings.[42] Most inhabitants of the Republic continued to revile Alba; however, these events unleashed a new wave of propaganda, transferring much of the wrath of the Dutch rebels to the king of Spain.[43] Three works in particular, written between 1581 and 1609, influenced Vondel's conception of a tyrant as someone who violates both the rights and the well-being of the people in his care, namely Orange's *Apology* (1581), the anonymously authored *Political Education* (1582), and Grotius' *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty* (1604–1608). Each of these texts condemns the king of Spain and begins to tentatively make connections between political and sexual violation—a technique Vondel masterfully employs in his *Gijsbrecht*.

First and foremost among this propaganda was Orange's vehement response to Philip's ban of Orange and offer of reward and pardon to any criminal able to assassinate the prince. The *Apology*, written by a number of Orangeist propagandists, marks the first instance the prince directly attacks Philip II.[44] In this fundamentally important renunciation of the Spanish king, Orange supported the idea that the king was a despicable tyrant because he disrespected traditional rights and mistreated innocent people. Although expressed as an afterthought, he also cast this mistreatment in a language of sexual violation. In the first instance, once again asserting medieval privileges, Orange charged Philip with overstepping his bounds in the Low Countries:

> King he may be in Castile, in Aragon, in Naples, or in the Indies . . . we in these lands know none higher than a Duke or a Count, whose power is limited according to our privileges that he has sworn to uphold upon his joyful entry.[45]

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[42] Van Gelderen, xviii, xxv–xxvi.

[43] Israel, 199–210, especially 209–210.

[44] Israel, 210. See Geurts for an excellent discussion of the *Apology* and other early images in the pamphlets of the Revolt. See also William of Orange, *The Apologie of Prince William of Orange against the Proclamation of the King of Spain*, ed. H. Wansink (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969).

[45] ". . . dat hy Coningh is . . . Hy magh het wesen in Castilien, in Arragon, tot Napels, in Indien . . . Nochtans so vele isser af, dat wy in dese landen niet hooghers dan eenen Hertoghe ende eenen Grave en kennen, wiens macht met seker paelen is afgescheyden,

Orange further declared that Philip's attempt to exercise absolute power in the Low Countries has "desecrated and violated" (*schendde ende violeerde*) this oath, and thus his honor. These words, the precise formulation frequently employed to describe rape, signal a connection between political and sexual violation.[46]

A second instance in which Orange accused the king of tyrannical acts is for failing to protect his people, which had resulted in many instances of rape. Rather than spare the king responsibility for his commander's actions, Orange charged the king with sending:

> . . . not only the Duke of Alba, but also all those under him who after his departure followed the order . . . concluded in the council of Spain, to destroy and enslave us . . . this Duke of Alba, who was raised from his youth with an unceasing hatred for these lands, will never be satiated by all that blood that he has guzzled, which he has spilled in abundance visible to all flowing down the streets in all cities of these lands . . . He even boasted that he had put to death 18,000 poor, innocent persons . . . [Since] the master is known by his servants . . . you can judge the good will and affection that the King feels for [these people] by the deeds of the Duke of Alba . . .[47]

Thus, Orange held Philip directly responsible for all these tyrannical acts committed by Alba and his successors. Orange further critiqued the king by adding: "We do not wish to relate the raping, ransoming, and arson

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achtervolghende onse privilegien die hy tot syner blijden incomste ghesworen heeft." Orange, *Apologie, ofte Verantwoordinghe*, ed. C.A. Mees (Antwerp: Santpoort/ De Sikkel, 1923), 39. Subsequent citations of the *Apology* come from this edition.

[46] "Ja dat meer is, de Coningh hadde al langhen vooren hem by den Paus laten dispenseren van den eedt dien hy ulieden ghedaen hadde aengaende d' onderhoudinge van uwe privilegien: waer doer hy niet alleenelick syn ghegheven trouwe *schendde ende violeerde*, maer hy gheloofde oock al te lichtveerdelick ende schadelick sommige dwaese raedtgevers, daer mede maer al te veele bewijsende hoe voorsichtigh dat hy was." Orange, *Apologie*, 80. Italics mine.

[47] "Nu so en heeft niet alleene den Hertoghe van Alve, maer oock alle de gene die onder hem ende nae syn vertreck eenigh bevel hebben ghehadt, ons ghenoegh te kennen ghegheven, wat in den raedt van Spaegnien al over menighen tijdt is ghesloten geweest, naemelick van ons uut te roeyen, ende tot slaven ende lijf-eygene te maecken . . . . also is desen Hertoghe van Alve oock van jonghs op in eenen onversoenelicken haet ende vyandtschap teghen dese landen opghequeeckt ende gevoedt worden, die noyt en heeft konnen versadighet warden doer al dat bloet dat hy gesopen heeft: d' welck hy in so grooter overvloedicheit heeft vergoten, dat men in allen steden van dese landen 't selve met geheele beken heeft ghesien langhs de straten loopen: ja gelijck hy hemselven heeft durven beroemen, so heeft hy meer dan achtien duysent arme onschuldighe personen doer 's beuls handen laten ombrengen. In der voegen dat so iemandt begheert te weten wat den secreten raedtslagh van Spaegnien is, hoedanigh dat 's Coninghs wille is, ende hoe lief dat hy ons heeft: die sal 't selve al te maele in de bloetghierighe feyten des voorsz. Hertoghen van Alve so klaerlick bevinden . . ." Orange, *Apologie*, 78.

that the Spanish have inflicted."[48] Although Orange claimed a moral high ground by refusing to discuss the sexual violence inflicted by the Spanish, he connected Alba's military occupation and the violation of innocent Dutch women. Third, Orange charged Philip with incest, the murder of his son Don Carlos, the murder of his wife, Isabella de Valois, and with having many notorious affairs—all of which suggest the king is a man unwilling to curb his sexual desires and unable to protect even his own family members.[49] By making these three points, Orange and his propagandists suggested that Philip violated the traditional Dutch political system, the well-being of the people, and even the sanctity of his own family. In so doing, they set the stage for Vondel's use of sexual language to describe political injustice, his contention that leaders are responsible for the misbehavior of their troops, and his suggestion that a man who is unable to protect his family members from his own immorality is not fit to rule.

Another important treatise in this post-1581 wave of anti-Philip propaganda that identifies a tyrant as someone who instigates both political and sexual violation is the anonymously published treatise, *Political Education*. This text is an eloquent reiteration of all prior defenses of the abjuration of the king and an explanation of the utility of the new oath of loyalty to the States General. Like Orange's *Apology*, it accuses King Philip of appropriating more power than he had inherited, of assaulting his own subjects by sending the Duke of Alba, and of failing to protect his own family members from his base cruelty. Three additional elements of this author's argument are particularly noteworthy: his assessment of the opposing goals of a tyrant and a just ruler, the elevation of this inner-worldly conflict to a spiritual level, and the more prominent role rape plays in his depiction of tyranny. As he defined a tyrant, this author argued that no self-respecting Dutch person can support the king of Spain, because his aim is to oppress the people:

> . . . it is impossible to please both the government of these Netherlands and the King of Spain. One must hate the one, love the other. For one advocates his fatherland, liberty, wife, children, privileges, goods and blood, while the other seeks to oppress them with force or malpractice.[50]

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[48] "Wy en willen niet seggen van 't verkrachten, rantsoeneren ende brandtschatten dat de Spaegniaerden ghebruyckt hebben . . ." Orange, *Apologie*, 79.

[49] Orange, *Apologie*, 35–6.

[50] Anonymous, *Political Education*, in *The Dutch Revolt*, trans. Martin van Gelderen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 180.

This anonymous author asserted that only the Dutch government promotes the well-being of the people and assigns to the government many of the traits earlier propaganda ascribed to William of Orange. When enumerating the things the citizens should fight to protect, which he terms "the holy things," he included wife and children, alongside "the religion, the fatherland, the government, [and] liberty."[51] Protecting innocent wives and children thus ranks very high on the list of sacred duties for a proper Dutch patriot in this treatise.

Not only did this anonymous author make it clear that tyrants mistreat innocents while good Dutchmen protect them, he also incorporated new gruesome details of precisely how Philip's representatives mistreated the Dutch people. This treatise claimed that the king of Spain sent: "the Duke of Alba . . . with a large bunch of robbers, thieves, murderers, godless, slanderers, cruel crooks, rapers, sodomites, perjurers, and similar scum to the Low Countries . . ."[52] This tract also argued that the king:

> . . . created and hired one party of subjects, the Malcontents, to persecute, kill and massacre, murder cruelly and execute the other, namely us, who keep ourselves under the protection of his Princely Excellence [Orange] and the State General of the united Provinces. They are to force honourable women, to rape young girls, to rob, plunder and burn houses, towns and villages, and to do other similar ungodly and terrible unbearable things, especially to bring those who are free into eternal slavery . . .[53]

This author thus declared that the king ordered this group of "Malcontents"—actually a group of Catholic magnates largely from the southern provinces of Artois and Hainault who opposed the power of Orange in the 1570s—to rape women and girls, commit "ungodly" atrocities, and enslave the people.[54] This claim goes beyond the idea that the king is responsible for the evil acts of his representatives to suggest that the king himself instructed his troops to commit these atrocities, including rape. This tract thus intensified the link between political tyranny and sexual violation.

Grotius' legal treatise on the justice of certain acts of war, entitled *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, which he penned during the years 1604 and 1605, similarly connects Philip's political violation of the Netherlands with the brutal violation of his subjects. Although he wrote it in

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[51] Anonymous, *Political Education*, 183.
[52] Anonymous, *Political Education*, 208–9.
[53] Anonymous, *Political Education*, 182.
[54] Anonymous, *Political Education*, 63.

Latin and it was never published in full, it is important because it strongly informed his famous treatise, *On the Rights of War and Peace* (1625) and Vondel's *Gijsbrecht*. It is likely that Grotius shared his views and possibly this text with Vondel and others at the informal intellectual gatherings they are known to have attended between 1609 and Grotius' imprisonment in 1618.

Similar to the *Apology, Political Education*, and older propaganda, Grotius charged Alba with altering Dutch laws and systems of justice and taxation all "in contravention of the statutes which the various princes had sworn to observe." Moreover, Grotius accused Alba with forcing the citizens to respond with violence because: "... their bodies were being dragged away to punishment, their goods were being seized for the imperial treasury ... and they were cut off from every other means of defense."[55] He indicted King Philip for his failure "to defend the peoples commended to his care" and insisted that "no one could doubt ... that the war against the Dutch was being waged at his command" because the king rewarded Alba and others who injured innocent people.[56] Grotius also justified the Revolt on the grounds that the Dutch had to rise up to defend their lives, property, and liberty and to put an end to other kinds of horrible abuses the militant Spanish had heaped upon them, including "the slaughter of the innocent, rapine, and all other violent deeds of this kind, which are sinful in warfare ..."[57] Even Grotius, whose ostensible goal was to establish legal guidelines for international warfare, asserted that once a ruler has crossed the line of violating his subjects' political rights, his violent (sexual) abuse of them soon follows.

In addition to making this connection between political and personal violation, Grotius interjected a highly optimistic assessment of the Dutch character:

> Throughout this war, the singularly humane qualities of the Dutch, like their extraordinary fortitude, have been apparent at all times. For, with the most long-suffering patience, they have been content to ward off violence directed against their very existence and to restore an equal degree of freedom to neighbouring cities, without undertaking any graver action against the enemy ... Moreover, if at times the implacable ferocity of the enemy

[55] Hugo Grotius, *De Iure Praedae Commentarius/ Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, eds. Gwladys L. Williams and Walter H. Zeydel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 169. The editors' introduction to this text provides more detail on why and when Grotius wrote this text.

[56] Grotius, 169–170.

[57] Grotius, 289.

> compelled the Dutch themselves to be rather severe, in defiance of their natural inclinations, they nevertheless showed themselves ready to make concessions equal to or even surpassing those made by the enemy. The latter, indeed, have invariably set an example of perfidy and cruelty; the Dutch, an example of clemency and good faith.[58]

This idealistic list of the innate moral qualities of the humane, strong, patient, merciful, peaceful, yet fierce when provoked, freedom-loving, and law-abiding Dutch people is one that Vondel adopted for the Dutch characters in his play as well. As we will see, however, Vondel made some important additions. While Grotius was solely concerned with the Dutch penchant for civic morality, Vondel was fixated on their capacity for religious morality expressed through piety, obedience, humility, and service. Most notably, Grotius' text combined the arguments from Orange's *Apology* and the anonymous *Political Education* to insinuate that once a ruler commits tyrannical acts of political violation he has wandered out onto a slippery slope that inevitably leads him to mistreat his people in a variety of ways.

Propaganda 1609–1621

From 1581 on, the king of Spain remained the primary enemy of the Revolt, but a new shift occurred in 1609 and persisted throughout the Twelve Year's Truce with Spain that ended in 1621. During this time propagandists directed their ire toward enemy soldiers. This shift was due to the impact of the treaty on the new Republic. On the one hand, the Truce afforded a respite from the violence and financial burden of warfare and implicitly recognized the new state's existence. On the other hand, however, it gave rise to discord among rebel factions since it was the active struggle against Spain that gave the northern provinces cause to collaborate. During the years of negotiation leading up to the Truce an internal conflict erupted, worsening divisions between the states party (merchants and regents supporting statesman Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the conclusion of peace with Spain, and greater religious tolerance) and the pro-Orange party (Reformed ministers and many others who supported the stadholders, and pressed

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[58] Grotius, 171. This was not his only work to claim attractive characteristics for himself and his compatriots. His later book, *On the Antiquity of the Batavian Republic (De Antiquitate Reipublicae Batavicae)* (1610), recounted the story of the Hollanders' ancestors' (the Batavians) successful struggle for independence from Rome in order to explain the particular affection the Hollanders had for their privileges and rights.

for stricter orthodoxy and a conclusive defeat of Spanish troops). These differences came to a head in 1618, nearly splitting apart the new union, and even after the resolution in favor of the pro-Orange party and Prince Maurits, remained a frustrating point of contention.[59] It was at this point that Oldenbarnevelt was executed, Grotius arrested, and Vondel, in continuing support of these men and the policy of religious toleration, regularly displayed contempt for the policies of Prince Maurits.[60]

This tenuous period of truce and internal discord sparked a need for a new, more impassioned form of patriotic propaganda that highlighted the terrible atrocities committed by the enemy in order to draw attention away from the divisions between Dutch citizens. A number of Calvinist ministers answered this call by writing short, alarmist histories to remind the Dutch of the early events of the Revolt and the continuing grave danger of Spanish treachery. In spite of Vondel's dislike of these ministers' insistence on strict Calvinist theology and practice, he agreed with their focus on Spanish villainy and their tactics appear in his works.[61] Many of these patriotic histories reissued prints detailing military mayhem from the 1570s by artists such as Frans Hogenburg and summarized the massive epic histories written by the likes of Pieter Bor and Emmanuel Meteren.[62]

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[59] See Israel, chapter 18: "Crisis within the Dutch Body Politic, 1607–1616," 421–432 and chapter 19: "The Fall of the Oldenbarnevelt Regime, 1616–1618," 433–449. A good introduction to the Dutch Republic's turbulent beginning, period of the truce, and the religious controversy of the Arminians is Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For more detail concerning the Arminian controversy and how it fit within previous religious debates see Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, Pollmann, *Religious Choice in the Dutch Republic. The Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius* (1565–1641) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), and Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974).

[60] Duits, 165.

[61] See Pipkin, "'They were not humans, but devils in human bodies': Depictions of Sexual Violence and Spanish Tyranny as a Means of Fostering Identity in the Dutch Republic," *Journal of Early Modern History* 13 (2009): 229–264.

[62] Franz Hogenburg completed the earliest and most influential series of twenty prints of this massacre between 1576 and 1577. See Hogenberg, *Engravings of Scenes from the History of the Netherlands, France and Germany 1535, 1558–1623*. Also found in Frederik Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen*. (Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1863). This massacre was one of many that resulted as the Army of Flanders attacked cities against official orders in order to extract booty from the inhabitants and to negotiate back pay from Spain. See Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars*. Second Edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). See especially his section on mutinies pp. 157–176 and appendix J 253 for details of mutinies 1570–1607. For more on the use of these images in the early propaganda of the Revolt see Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*, Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), and Van Nierop,

From the large corpus of prints and texts left by these authors and artists of the early Revolt, Calvinist ministers selected those that featured soldiers desecrating institutions the Dutch held sacred: the family and the church. Their focus on these particularly odious crimes set an important precedent for Vondel who also chose to highlight the Spanish desecration of these hallowed entities.

The propaganda of this truce period depict soldiers' attacks on the Dutch home as a perversion of its God-intended purpose—a particularly heinous act because households were considered the foundation of the Protestant Republic, the heart of companionate marriages, and the source of moral instruction of children. Instead of being a place of safety, familial companionship, and religious instruction, the household morphs into a torture chamber. One of Hogenburg's frequently reprinted images (see plate 5 below) features an attack on the people of Antwerp in which troops suspended one woman from the rafters by her wrists and attached a weight to her feet, hung another woman by her breasts, and a man by his testicles. These brutal Spanish soldiers stripped their male and female victims naked and instituted forms of torture that targeted their exposed bodies and sexual organs.[63] Here the Spanish are the authors of a sort of upside-down, topsy-turvy, anti-family. In the room to the right of the image where in other circumstances a husband and wife might have enjoyed each other's company, a man and woman are tortured side by side. Instead of enjoying the nurturing attentions of their parents, several youths, presumably dead, lie face down in the street.

In other prints of this truce period, the abuse of Dutch family members serves as a manifestation of Spanish religious intolerance. For example, the gruesome illustration that begins the anonymous *True Description . . . of Spanish Tyranny* (*Warachtighe Beschrijvinghe . . . vande . . . Barbarische Tyrannije Bedreven by de Spaengiaerden*) of 1621, includes smaller scenes across the top of the page that illustrate the condemnation of a nobleman

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Het verraad van het Noorderkwartier: oorlog, terreur en recht in de Nederlandse Opstand (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1999).

[63] Anonymous, *Tweede Deel van de Spieghel der Spaense Tyrannye geschiet in Nederlant. Waer in te sien is de onmenschelijcke en wreede handelingen der Spangiaerden, die sy in dese ende andere omleggende plaetsen bedreven hebben* (Amsterdam: Evert Kloppenburg op 't Water tegen over de Koren Beurs inde Vergulden Bijbel, 1638), 84. Earlier editions of this book appeared in 1620 and 1628. This image is also found in the Latin and Dutch editions of *Afbeeldingen* (1616) and *Spiegel de Spaanse Tyrannie* (1622) and in Johannes Gijsius, *Oorsprong en Voortgang der Neder-Landtscher Beroerten ende Ellendicheden: Waerin vertoont worden/ de voornaemste Tyrannijen, Moorderijen, ende andere onmenschelijcke Wreetheden, die onder het ghebiedt van Philips de II Coninck van Spaengien, door zijne Stad-houders in 'twerck ghestelt zijn/ gheduyrende dese Nederlantsche Troublen ende Oorlogen . . .* 1616.

Plate 5. *Antwerp*, from the *Second Part of the Mirror of Spanish Tyranny Perpetrated in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Evert Kloppenburg op 't Water tegen over de Koren Beurs inde Vergulden Bijbel, 1638), 84. Leiden University Library, 672 F27.

by the Council of Troubles and his execution, likely for support of the nobles' petition for greater religious toleration (see plate 6). His distraught wife stands nearby highlighting the idea that religious intolerance destroyed families through judicial execution.

The more prominent scene across the bottom of the page depicts an additional way in which Spanish violence destroyed families. The image is framed by the torture of two women. The figure dominating the image to the left is a woman, tortured to death, hanging limply by her breasts, swinging above a heap of bodies. To the far right, a Spanish soldier holds a flame or sharp instrument up to the bared breast of a woman tied to the rafters. Beneath her, soldiers apply various forms of torture to a naked man and in the background are several bodies being burned at the stake. These torture scenes appropriate centuries-old Catholic virgin martyr iconography like that of Saint Agatha and Saint Agnes, in which the violence of unbelievers is directed at Christian women's breasts and naked

Plate 6. Frontispiece of Anonymous, *True Description . . . of Spanish Tyranny* (1621). Amsterdam University Library, OK 63 3395.

bodies. The martyred women in this scene, however, are not virgins, but wives, suffering and dying for their Protestant beliefs at the hands of vicious soldiers. This collection of ghastly images thus provides two examples of how the Spanish policy of religious intolerance led to the violent destruction of families.

The dramatic propaganda of the truce period emphasizes a number of other ways Spanish soldiers violated the sanctity of Dutch families. One particularly gruesome kind of attack was aimed at unborn infants. In the anonymous *Images and Descriptions of all the Battles . . . in the Netherlands during the War against the King of Spain* (*Afbeeldingen en Beschryvingen van alle de veld-slagen, . . .ghevallen in de Nederlanden, geduerende d'oorloghe teghens den coningh van Spaengien*) is a print depicting the 1575 actions of soldiers in the town of Oudewater, a town situated between Gouda and Utrecht. On the left side of the image (see plate 7), a pregnant woman whom soldiers have hung by her wrists is visible.

The text narrates that these soldiers "cut or ripped the living child from her body" and a soldier is poised to stab the child once it has fallen to the

(55) Onder Coningh Philips II. ende het Gouvernement van Don Loys de Requesens. Fol. 171.
OV DE WATER
Quis veteres non cantet aquas hoc carmine dignas,
Exitium passas, servantes fœdera Belgis?
Quid memorem cædes & cunctis civibus ebeu
Vix super unus erat, sed vivit fama superstes

Plate 7. *Oudewater*, from Willem Baudartius, *Images and Descriptions of all the Battles . . . in the Netherlands during the War against the King of Spain*, 170. Leiden University Library, 1365 H 15.

ground.[64] Heartbreakingly, at least one small child looks on in horror as two other children do what they can to fend off the soldiers approaching the hanging woman. Many of the authors also describe this scene, including Johannes Gijsius, minister of Streefkerk, a small city to the east of Rotterdam. His account states: "The Soldiers raped the women and then stabbed them. Yes, some of them cut the fruit out of [the women's] bodies and cruelly mistreated them . . ."[65] Stories of the rape and execution

[64] Willem Baudartius, *Afbeeldinghe, ende beschrijvinghe van alle de veld-slagen, [. . .] ghevallen in de Nederlanden, geduerende d'oorloghe teghens den coningh van Spaengien* (T'Amsterdam: By Michiel Colijn, 1615), 170.

[65] Gijsius, *Oorsprong en Voortgang,* 351. Versions of this story are also found in *Afbeeldinghe . . . van alle de Veld-slagen*, 170 and Willem Baudartius, *Morghen-wecker der vrye Nederlandtsche provintien, ofte een cort verhael van de bloedighe vervolghinghen ende wreetheden door de Spaenjaerden ende haere adherenten inde Nederlanden, gheduerende dese veertichjarighe trublen ende oorloghen, begaen aen vele steden ende ettelijcke duysent particuliere persoonen* (Tot Danswick: by Crijn Vermeulen de Jonge, 1610), 2 verso–3 recto.

Plate 8. Front page of Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Mirror of Spanish Tyranny Perpetrated in the West Indies* (Amsterdam: J.E. Cloppenburg, 1620). Leiden University Library, 672 F27.

Plate 9. Detail of front page from Las Casas, *The Mirror of Spanish Tyranny Perpetrated in the West Indies*. Leiden University Library, 672 F27.

of young, vulnerable women and their unborn offspring are frequently recounted in these histories. Yet another example of the Spanish attack on young mothers and their babies can be found on the title page of a Dutch edition of Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas' *Mirror of Spanish Tyranny* (plate 8). The image in the lower right corner (plate 9) depicts a Spanish soldier mercilessly impaling a very young child on his sword as a mother, also threatened at sword point, looks on helplessly. These images brand the Spanish as brutes desperate to emasculate good Dutch men, attack Dutch fertility, and in so doing bring the Dutch freedom-loving way of life to an end.

Another common way soldiers abused families according to this propaganda was through the violent sexual abuse of young daughters. Instead of offering these young women protection, soldiers invaded their homes and defiled them. In addition to the scene depicting the dissection of a woman, plate 7 also features two soldiers—wearing specifically Spanish-

style helmets— who chase young women with loose and disheveled hair (one near the center of this composition toward the bottom and another to the far right of the image).[66] Free-flowing hair was meant to convey the idea that forced sex was either inevitable or had already occurred in both the medieval pictorial tradition and in seventeenth-century prints depicting the miseries of war. Thus this print decries both the Spanish soldiers' propensity to rape women and to mutilate and kill their offspring.[67] This print highlights the horrors of infanticide and rape to suggest that one of the Spanish soldiers' goals was to replace properly begotten Dutch offspring with their own immoral progeny.

Rape of young women is particularly prominent in Calvinist minister Willem Baudartius' *Morning Alarm*. Within the first five pages, he mentioned that soldiers violate women seven different times. In two particularly shocking stories, Baudartius claimed that soldiers rape women specifically in the presence of family members—a charge that vilifies the soldiers further for purposefully intensifying the physical and emotional pain they inflict upon the Netherlanders. In the first instance the soldiers: "... raped the Women and daughters in the presence of their Fathers and Husbands forcing them to watch and if anyone resisted they shouted *Spania, Spania* and murdered all."[68] In Baudartius' second story, a husband and two neighbors stop an attempted rape. Again the soldier's companions cry out "*Spania, Spania*," then they deliver the husband and neighbors:

> ... into the hands of the Magistrate threatening the latter that unless [the husband and neighbors] were punished by being put to death, [the soldiers] would set the city on fire. Against their will, the judges had to sentence two of the Burghers to be hung and the third to be strangled.[69]

Baudartius vilified the soldiers by emphasizing their attacks on innocent women and their family members and, like the images above, he insinuated that it was Spanish soldiers, not foreign mercenaries, who committed these atrocities.[70] In this particular story the soldiers not only attack a

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66 Gijsius, 351.
67 Wolfthal, chapters 2–3, especially 91–98.
68 Baudartius, *Morghen-Wecker*, 2 verso–3 recto.
69 Baudartius, 3 verso.
70 Contrary to the propaganda, however, the majority of soldiers were not Spanish, but German or Netherlandish. Parker, *The Army of Flanders* ..., 231–2 Appendix A.

woman, her family, and the neighbors who come to her rescue, but they violate the local system of justice as well.[71]

Many patriotic propagandists from this period were also eager to point out that mutinying Spanish troops did not spare religious institutions or personnel, even Catholic ones.[72] Baudartius, for example, claimed that the Duke of Alba forced an exorbitant amount of gold from the Netherlands by exempting "neither worldly persons, nor widows, nor orphans, poor houses of God, or hospitals."[73] He also asserted that as the "King's Soldiers mutinied . . . they plundered, murdered, and enslaved everyone whether he was Clergy or Lay/ Papist or Beggar."[74] One anonymously published text explains that the Catholics who did not flee Zutphen believed wrongly that their religion would protect them from the soldiers; they suffered the same fate as other inhabitants.[75] Gijsius agreed that the Spanish troops did not spare Catholics: ". . . the Spaniards killed Catholics and Reformed alike without making any distinction . . ."[76] Gijsius related a story in which the people of Aelst tried to demonstrate their loyalty to the Catholic faith by preventing iconoclasm in their city and hanging a Reformed minister. He concluded "this had no impact since they were among the first whom the Spaniards . . . attacked."[77]

Both Baudartius and Gijsius also characterize the mutinying Spanish troops as eager to torture their co-religionists in order to extort money, including members of Catholic religious orders. To acquire the treasure of the Abby of Afflighem, these authors claim that the Spanish "hung the monks up by their manhood," just as the soldiers had done to the husband in Hogenburg's print (plate 5).[78] The author of the second volume of the *Mirror of Spanish Tyranny* emphasized that the troops

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[71] Baudartius, *Morghen-Wecker*, 4 recto and 5 verso.

[72] Other sources back up the historical accuracy of this claim. This violence directed at Dutch Catholics had the unintended consequence of assuring their loyalty to the Dutch Republic. See Van Nierop, "Sewing the Bailiff in a Blanket: Catholics and the Law in Holland," in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*, 107.

[73] Baudartius, *Morghen-Wecker*, 2 verso.

[74] Beggars are initially a group of nobles who plead for the cause of Protestant worship under the leadership of Hendrik van Brederode in 1566. Baudartius, *Morghen-Wecker*, 8 recto and verso.

[75] *Veelouschen alarm ofte onpartijdich verhael vande overcomst, in ende uyt-tocht, van graef Henderick vanden Berg in Veelouwen. Midtsgaders vande moort, brant, roof, schande en schade, aldaer ende op meer andere plaetsen aengherecht. Met een beschrijvinghe van 'tgheene vast by alleman in Gelderlandt daer van gheordeelt wort*. ([S.l: s.n.], 1624), 2 recto.

[76] Gijsius, 316.

[77] Gijsius, 354.

[78] Baudartius, *Morghen-Wecker*, 9 recto.

"plundered cloisters" and "raped Virgins and Nuns." He wrote: "They spared no Women regardless of their status, yes Spiritual Nuns and Beguines suffered an unfair proportion at the hands of the dear Spaniards for whom they still pray daily."[79] Rather than depicting the Revolt as a Protestant struggle against a Catholic enemy, many authors claimed that the Spanish were no longer Catholic as evidenced by their violation, abuse, extortion, and murder of Catholic men and women. In accordance with the contemporary Christian conception that one is either consumed by Christ or possessed by the devil, many contemporary Dutch authors seem to conclude that Spanish moral bankruptcy meant that they had joined forces with Satan. Baudartius comes to this conclusion:

> Some of the Spanish Soldiers have themselves admitted after the fact that during the first three days of this fury [of Antwerp] they were not Human, but rather *Diables encharnes*, that is devils in human bodies.[80]

Elsewhere he claims that the Spanish had demonic powers to "bewitch and blind" the Dutch to the threat they posed and that "the Devil from Hell could not lead [the troops] so he had the pope and the King of Spain and their supporters do it for him."[81]

The alarmist histories of the truce period vilified Spanish soldiers as demonic forces who desecrate the sanctity of the Dutch home, turn it into a torture chamber, and martyr husbands and wives. Instead of protecting children and young women, troops target unborn infants and chase down and rape young women. These authors adopted a much more hysterical tone than the propaganda of the early Revolt. In the propaganda of the first forty years of the Revolt, authors and artists hesitantly outlined a connection between political and sexual violation and employed the violation of women's bodies to symbolize diverse forms of tyrannical violation. In the propaganda authored during the Truce, authors insinuated that young, vulnerable bodies bore the brunt of Spain's military invasion. These later works also impacted Vondel's work by inspiring his exaggeration of the Spanish soldiers' proclivity to violate sacred spaces traditionally considered safe from military violence—the church and the home.

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[79] *Tweede Deel van de Spieghel der Spaensche Tyrannye Geschiet in Nederlant*, 110–111.

[80] *Afbeeldinghe . . . van alle de veld-slagen*, 204.

[81] Baudartius, *Spieghel der ievcht, ofte corte Cronijcke der Nederlantsche geschiedenissen.: In de welcke . . . verhaelt . . . worden, de voornaaemste Tyrannien ende . . . wreedtheden, die door het beleydt der Coningen van Hispaengien . . . in Nederlandt bedreven zijn*. Amsterdam: by Herman Allertsz. Coster, 1615), 4 verso–5 recto.

Through this claim, these Calvinist ministers propagated the idea that because they were given over to the devil these forces would indiscriminately engage in both religious and sexual abuse.

Rape and Vondel's Gijsbrecht—*Violation of Social Norms*

Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* can be seen as the culmination of the diverse bits of revolt propaganda we have examined thus far and as a famous example of a more self-congratulatory and self-assured expression of Dutch identity. This patriotic play reflects the more stable situation the Republic found itself in by 1637. The stadholder Frederik Hendrik achieved a number of impressive military successes between 1629 and 1633, the Dutch East India Company expanded its power in Asia, and the economy expanded rapidly from the mid- to late 1630s.[82] Overall, the Republic was far more stable and optimistic during the 1630s despite continuing domestic contention. It is in this context that Vondel neatly connected the various forms of tyrannical violation behind the metaphor of rape. By making rapaciousness an integral part of the Spanish national character, and charging them with political, physical, and religious abuse of the Dutch people, he removed from debate whether the Dutch should fight. Whatever religious affiliation or political persuasion, Vondel propagated the idea that the Dutch had no choice but to expel the Spanish and cultivate their own more lofty moral standards.

Vondel's seventeenth-century audience—inundated with depictions of Spanish tyranny for some seventy years, accustomed to reading allegories, and expecting the past to reveal lessons for the present—had no difficulty following Vondel's study of tyranny across the ages. Although Vondel did not spell out the connection between the medieval characters and contemporary political figures as Hooft's *Geeraerdt* does, the characters of the *Gijsbrecht* stand in for the villains and heroes of the Dutch Revolt.[83] The characters Witte and Floris enact Philip's, Alba's, and their troops' despicable tyranny, while conversely Gijsbrecht's character brings to mind William of Orange's moral and just leadership. Through his medi-

[82] Israel, 532–4.

[83] Hooft explicitly connects the medieval tyranny of Count Floris with the contemporary Spanish tyranny: "The one [who is] named William [of Orange] appeared in Holland, and replanted/ The suppressed freedom, in her previous position. The foreign violence was driven out of everywhere; The great inhumanity, the great horrors/ Of the Spanish Tyranny; which stood as firmly as a pole . . ." Hooft, 131, lines 1514–1518.

eval characters, Vondel both charges the Spanish with specific misdeeds and uses rape as a symbol for all the personal, political, and religious violations the Spanish tyrants wreaked upon the Low Countries.

The most straightforward connection of rape and tyranny in the *Gijsbrecht* is Vondel's insistence that tyrants literally rape women. Vondel included two separate instances of rape in his play.[84] In act three, the deceased Machteld appears to Gijsbrecht's wife Badeloch as an utterly distraught rape victim so that the audience can witness the pain of her violation. Even though her rape occurred long before the play begins and the audience hears the story in Gijsbrecht's opening monologue, Vondel's play later returns to this subject to highlight her victimization. In Badeloch's account, Machteld weeps, wrings her hands, pulls out her hair, scratches her breast, rips her gown apart, sprinkles herself with dust, wails, and curses Count Floris, her attacker.[85]

Vondel also suggested that rapacious tyranny runs in Floris' bloodline; it is his bastard son Witte, the product of the count's own sexual immorality, who rapes the nun, Claris, in act five. Although this crime is cited in detail in the opening section of this chapter, it is worthy to note here that Vondel accentuated Claris' suffering for dramatic effect. Rather than allowing her to remain senseless throughout her violation, Vondel relates that she regains consciousness during her rape at which point she pitifully cries out to Christ, the Virgin Mary, Saint Clare (the founder of her religious order and her namesake), and her mother Machteld, before Witte stomps on her chest, killing her.[86] Vondel made certain that neither the rape of Machteld, nor that of her daughter Claris appear only as incidental acts of injustice that spur the "heroes off to war" as does Helen's fate in the Trojan War.[87] Rather, he allotted ample time for his audience to focus on the anguish tyrants inflict upon innocent women, thus heightening their aversion toward these malefactors.

As Vondel emphasized the suffering of rape victims, he took cues from Hooft's earlier play. It is Machteld who commences Hooft's play with a long monologue expressing her grave sadness:

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[84] For more on how women's bodies serve as symbols in the *Gysbrecht*, see Bettina Noak, "Vondel as a Dramatist: The Representations of Language and Body," in *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679)*, ed. Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (Brill: European History and Culture E-Books Online, 2012), 124–126.

[85] Vondel, 84–5, lines 760–769.

[86] Vondel, 107, lines 1476–1479.

[87] Vondel, 85, lines 778.

> . . . With great violence [my]
> Sorrow bursts out in inconsolable lamentations
> In very deep sighs, in tears that are hot
> Then I sink in once and for all, and melt in my pain.[88]

Hooft granted Machteld a total of 136 lines to describe her own reactions and ensuing despair. After her initial outburst of cries, sighs, and tears, she recounts her longing for death, reminiscent of the deep, internal sorrow legible in the face of Rembrandt's 1666 Lucretia.[89] While Hooft wrote a similar sentiment for Machteld, unlike Lucretia she implicitly recognizes the unacceptability of suicide for Christians. This, however, does not irradicate Machteld's desire for death:

> And seeing that it is not your godly will
> That I arise or raise up this burdened head
> And lift it through this heartache;
> Allow death to hereafter take me down,
> And close with her chilling hand these wailing eyes;
> And dig a way in the earth through which I can flee
> This life's hateful light of the much too bright day,
> And all the difficulties that I cannot bear.
> Still, is death, which the happy curse,
> To visit me the accursed as an honored guest?
> It will be welcome in my dire need,
> O care easing sleep of death;
> Whose arts alone can still my gnawing pains.[90]

Hooft and Vondel both emphasized the enduring pain Machteld experienced long after her sexual violation to demonstrate the effects of a tyrant's wrongdoings thereby inspiring revulsion toward the tyrants Floris and Witte, and by association the contemporary tyrants Philip and Alba.

Vondel also followed Hooft's lead in pointing out the very different way virtuous medieval Dutch lords treated women. While villains Floris and Witte raped and killed women, Dutch ancestors Geeraerdt and Gijsbrecht protected and cared for their wives. In the second act of Hooft's play, following Machteld's rape, Geeraerdt wakes his wife and in a sweet and intimate conversation reassures her of his love for her and her worth.[91] While Lucretia's iconic story taught that rape could bring shame upon a woman unless the victim proved her chastity by taking her own life, Hooft

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88 Hooft, 45, lines 85–88.
89 Rembrandt, *Lucretia*, 1666. Institute of Arts, Minneapolis.
90 Hooft, 46–47, lines 117–129.
91 Hooft, 61, lines 354–355.

emphasized Geeraerdt's instinctive recognition of Machteld's innocence, his urge to care for his wife, and his ardent wish that he could have protected her.

Vondel depicted Gijsbrecht's care for his wife, Badeloch, in similar terms. When she has an upsetting vision he lovingly consoles her:

> Well sweet, what's this? Why this sobbing, and whence these tears?
> Why does sadness' mist becloud your shining eyes?
> Hold still, my sweet, hold still: your Gijsbrecht will dry them.
> Now kiss him, come, and say what is the source of this?[92]

He shows an even more fervent desire to protect his wife when she asks him to kill her to spare her the experience of witnessing the murder of her husband, the decapitation of her son, the defiling of her daughter, and her own execution. Gijsbrecht refuses:

> Oh horror, Badeloch. Am I the type of man
> Who'd kill a woman—and imagine, his own wife!—
> With the sword that I've wielded all my life so well
> For her sake, her children, her kin, and these good folks,
> Just like any cruel, rapacious tyrant would?
> That means I am your bed-partner no more, your spouse;
> That means we've lived like strangers so long together;
> That means I've renounced Christianity, my duty.
> How can lips so chaste as yours pronounce such words?
> Do you want me to betray you altogether
> And load my conscience with your death and ravishment?[93]

Gijsbrecht equates a failure to protect his wife with a desire to hurt or murder women like a "rapacious tyrant would." Unlike Witte, Gijsbrecht is not only a virtuous ruler, but also a model Dutch husband and father who upholds Christianity, protects his wife and children, and the larger community. And Badeloch, the ideal wife, is chaste and willing to sacrifice her life for her family.

Echoing William of Orange's claim that he would sacrifice himself for his people in his *Apology*, Gijsbrecht makes the same dramatic offer:

> My body I'd surrender, to be torn apart.
> I'd volunteer alone for cruelest torments
> Ever hatched by tyrants, to expiate the guilt
> And to secure a pardon for my harmless blood,

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[92] Vondel, 84, lines 752–5.
[93] Vondel, 115–6, lines 1747–57.

> My darling spouse, my assenting loyal subjects.
> Indeed I'd gladly give my life on their behalf . . .[94]

Instead of murdering and raping as tyrants do, Vondel and Hooft suggested that good rulers serve as role models for Dutch patriarchs because they protect women and children and promote the common good even at the cost of great personal sacrifice.

By characterizing a tyrant as a literal rapist, Vondel combined a number of the trends in the patriotic propaganda of the Revolt that this chapter has highlighted. As noted above, early prints depicted chained women who personify the provinces, a city, or the entire Low Countries to critique Alba's oppression, but did not portray explicit sexual violation. The alarmist histories of the 1610s and 1620s thoroughly vilified Spanish soldiers by illustrating the way they chased down young women and raped them in front of family members, but there was no suggestion that Philip or Alba raped women. William of Orange's *Apology* in which he charged Philip with incest and uxoricide most nearly approaches Vondel's assessment that tyrants violate and hurt the very women they should fight to protect. In fact, Gijsbrecht's exclamation: "Am I the type of man who would kill a woman—and imagine, his own wife" precisely repeats Orange's charge against Philip and is thus a condemnation of Philip's immoral behavior. Neither Philip nor Alba may have literally raped a woman, but, as Gijsbrecht's disagreement with his enemies' envoy implies, these tyrants were responsible for their soldiers' actions.[95] Therefore, their tyranny directly resulted in the rape and suffering of many innocent women.

Violation of Political Rights

An even greater contribution to the artistic assessment of Spanish tyranny is Vondel's deliberate use of rape as a metaphor for the violation of the political order. This chapter has already pointed out that Orange's *Apology* and Grotius' *Commentary* concluded that a tyrant's willingness to engage in the political violation of his subjects' rights invariably leads to the sexual violation of some subjects. This chapter also demonstrated that the earliest propaganda of the Revolt depicted Alba's violation of the political order through his penchant for shredding charters and privileges,

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[94] Vondel, 63, lines 71–78.
[95] Vondel, 112, lines 1623–1654.

his execution of noblemen, and his enslavement of the Low Countries. Vondel combined these ideas to increase the dramatic impact upon his audience. In his play, the violated state becomes a raped woman through the use of two substitutes: Gijsbrecht's kinswoman, Machteld, and the city of Amsterdam, figured as a beautiful, but vulnerable woman.

Vondel had another important source of inspiration for his connection of rape and political violation in Hooft's *Geeraerdt van Velzen*. In Hooft's play, Machteld's rape signifies the political violation of nobles' rights.[96] His summary of the contents of the play explains that Floris' alienation of his subjects is not a new or a one-time occurrence: "After Floris V, Count of Holland, had suppressed the nobility for a long while, his unjust and inimical treatment of the nobles increased with the rape of Van Velzen's wife."[97] Floris had long suppressed the nobility, and the rape of a nobleman's wife was one violation of their rights in a long line of actions against their privileges.

Floris' failure to protect his subjects undermines the basis of his authority. His vassals remind him of this: "You swore with God as your witness, and on your honor that you would lead and bravely protect this sovereign people, in war and peace."[98] He fails to do so. Machteld cannot believe he had not protected her as he should have. She wonders how he could: "Rape? A Wife? A well-born woman? A daughter of his friend? A love of his vassal?"[99] As a sovereign lord, his position requires him to protect her because of her position as a wife of his vassal, noble and daughter of a friend. As he rapes her:

> She cried so loud: 'I am raped and here is violence; What are you doing my noble Lord? If any other man was thus attacking me, You would be the one to turn him away with your sword.'[100]

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[96] Fokke Veenstra, "Aristocratische moraal. Een facet van de Geeraerdt van Velsen." *Ethiek en moraal bij P.C. Hooft. Twee studies in renaissancistische levensidealen* (Zwolle: W.E.J. Tjeenk Willink, 1968), 9–101.

[97] "Nae dat Floris de vijfde, Graeve van Hollandt, de gemeente lang gequeeckt hebbende om den Adel te onderdrucken, d'onghe-lijcken ende wederwaerdicheden den selve toeghedreven opghe-hoopt hadde met het vercrachten van de huysvrouwe des Heers van Velsen." Hooft, 35.

[98] "Ghy swoert met daeghing Gods, en by ghestaefden eed, Dat ghy dit vrye volck, in oorloch en in vreed, Trouwlijck berechten soudt en vroomelijck beweyren." Hooft, 67.

[99] "Vercrachten? een ghehuwde? een welghebooren vrouwe? Een dochter van zijn vriendt? een lief van zijn ghetrouwe?" Hooft, 43.

[100] "Zy riep soo luyd kracht, en gheweldt; Wat maeckt ghy mijn edele Landesheere? Waer daer een man op my ghestelt, Ghy soudt hem met uw swaerdt afkeeren." Hooft, 59.

Floris' position as her feudal lord requires him to fight off any of Machteld's would-be rapists and yet he instead is the rapist. Through her statements one can see that Hooft did not portray her rape solely as a personal violation. She does not lament the loss of control over her own body, but rather points to the men whose rights Floris violated as he raped her. She mentions her relationships to her husband and to her father. Hooft suggested that Machteld's rape is hideous because it signifies Floris' failure to protect noble rights.

In Vondel's play, this violation of a nobleman's wife is also clearly a political crime. In his opening monologue, Gijsbrecht condemns Floris for Machteld's rape and the violation of noble rights as a single act:

> . . . this raging blaze was sparked off first in Floris'
> Voluptuous breast, when by shameful passion urged
> He raped my niece, van Velzen's flower sans pareil.
> He discriminated against our peerage rights,
> Though confirmed by his own lips.[101]

It is the rape of Machteld that justifies Gijsbrecht's role in the political intrigue that results in the murder of the count.[102] Vondel's Gijsbrecht also defends himself by blaming Van Velzen and Herman van Woerden for involving him in their plan to ship Floris off to England; Gijsbrecht had wanted to call together the native knights and major towns to deal with him legally rather than "invite foreign violence here."[103] Machteld's rape thus brings to mind a tyrant's unwillingness to respect the nobility, but also serves to warn about the difficulty of restoring order once a tyrant is overthrown.

Hooft and Vondel both intended this story of a medieval count's failure to respect the traditional rights and privileges of the nobility to function as a transparent denunciation of Spanish tyranny. These authors both built upon the decades of propaganda that cast Alba as the violator of noble rights. Through their condemnation of Count Floris' disrespect for nobles' rights, they denounced Alba's execution of loyal nobles and the confiscation of their property. Condemning Floris for the violence of his troops also served as a means to critique Philip II for sending Alba as his

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[101] Vondel, 64, lines 112–116.

[102] Aercke makes the connection between Machteld's rape and Gijsbrecht's innocence in the introduction to his translation of the Gijsbrecht. Aercke points out that, as a rapist, "Floris was an insufferable tyrant, a violator of sacred oaths, an unworthy feudal lord, and Gijsbrecht's actions against him were perfectly justified." See Aercke's introduction to Vondel's *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*. 31.

[103] Vondel, 64, line 43.

representative. The rape of a prominent member of a noble family thus symbolizes the violation of all noble rights.

Vondel developed this theme further by using rape to denote the violation of civic rights as well. For instance, in the *Gijsbrecht*, Machteld's violation is synonymous with the violation of city privileges. When Machteld returns to earth in the guise of a woman just raped, she does so in order to simultaneously announce and symbolize the violation of Amsterdam. She first warns Gijsbrecht's wife Badeloch:

> It's not the time for sleeping now; arise and flee this house and try to reach another coast. Your foes control the walls, the city is on fire, and her end has come. Uncle Gijsbrecht tried in vain to protect his town. No fighting or resisting will be useful now.[104]

Like Machteld, the city is in distress; She appears with her flesh and gown ripped open at the moment when Floris' allies' troops rip Amsterdam apart. In fact, Machteld's own rape and the violation of the city are equally disturbing for this apparition.

Elsewhere in Vondel's play, Amsterdam itself is a woman violated. Reminiscent of Hans Collaert I's 1577 *Lament over the Desolation of the Netherlands* in which the Dutch state is a beautiful and vulnerable maiden under violent physical attack, the preeminent city of the Republic is also imagined as a woman who suffers violation.[105] A chorus recounts the destruction as follows:

> . . . Vengeance, with instruments of war
> Tried to ruin the tower-crown that bore
> This city so renowned for splendor,
> And with violent armed gangs to rip
> The girdles of defense from off her hip
> Intending her treasure to plunder,
>
> And the faithful city to defile—
> Just like Velzen's wife [Machteld]—by rapists vile.
> Like Helen, Lady Velzen earned the claim
> That during years war would rage for her,
> That a few dispersed survivors err,
> And a reborn Troy go down in flame.[106]

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[104] Vondel, 67.

[105] Hans Collaert I, *Belgicae Delaceratae Lamentatio*, engraving (ca. 1570–1580) Atlas Van Stolk, Historisch Museum Rotterdam. Noak refers to this motif as the "city maiden." Noak, 126.

[106] Vondel, 73, lines 421–432.

Plate 10. Hans Collaert I, *Lament over the Desolation of the Netherlands*, engraving (circa 1570–1580) Atlas Van Stolk, Historisch Museum Rotterdam.

Here Amsterdam is a beautiful, faithful woman disrobed and ravaged by troops. Vondel connected the rape of the city and the rape of Machteld to emphasize that it is Floris' abuse of noble prerogatives that fuels the attack on Amsterdam. He furthermore linked the rape of Machteld to that of Helen of Troy; both women's rapes lead to the attack of and destruction of the city in which they reside. Thus, while simultaneously making reference to classical antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the contemporary period, Vondel developed rape as a metaphor for the injustices that initiate a just rebellion. Similar to his use of Machteld's rape as a means to justify noble resistance against such forms of political violation, Amsterdam's violation in the *Gijsbrecht* validates the city's rebellion.

In an additional passage at the end of the play, Vondel again employed a beautiful woman as a metaphor for the city of Amsterdam, but this time as a counterpoint to the ravaged city of Gijsbrecht's time. The archangel Raphael appears to the characters on stage to predict Amsterdam's golden age:

> Your town is ruined, but its end has not yet come.
> It will rise from dust and ashes to greater glory,
> For wondrous are God the Lord Almighty's designs.
> Ere three centuries will have run their course, Holland
> Will increase its might with allies, and forcibly
> Kick the Romish altars out of all her churches,
> Declare annulled all Rights of the Count her ruler,
> And govern as united states. A bitter war
> From this will follow, and endless fights and troubles,
> Involving with much bloodshed all Christianity.
> Harassed by such strife, never tired of the wars,
> Your city rises and lifts her crown to heaven,
> And through ice and fire will find another world,
> And four winds will spread her roaring cannons' thunder.[107]

Vondel devised this passage to inspire intense feelings of pride and patriotism. He assured his audience that it was God's help that allowed the Dutch to overcome tyranny and that the medieval destruction of Amsterdam was a necessary precondition of its contemporary greatness. He even evoked William of Orange's declaration that Philip was solely a "count" in the Netherlands.[108] Amsterdam, a beautiful woman once ravaged, regains her crown and, victoriously armed with cannon, disavows Roman Catholicism, withstands the war against Spain, and discovers the New World. Raphael even mentions Vondel's play, Amsterdam's leaders, and its seventeenth-century audience in his monologue:

> Amstel's ancient name will not become less famous
> When your valiant city will inaugurate the Schouwburg
> And show your deeds on the high theatrical stage
> Before the Mayors and three dozen Councilors,
> Whose seats bear your coat of arms with crosses covered.[109]

Vondel employed the female body to symbolize both the violated and the victorious body politic in order to whip up far more distain for the enemy and pride in the new Dutch state than would be possible using other types of imagery. He invited male citizens in particular to identify with the need to protect the beautiful vulnerable state in the same way

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[107] Vondel, 118, lines 1839–1842.
[108] Orange, *Apologie*, ed. Mees, 50.
[109] Vondel, 118, lines 1846–1850.

they protect their wives and daughters, and thus to develop greater political passion for their fatherland.[110]

Violation of Religious Institutions

Thus far we have seen that Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* employs rape to symbolize the way the Spanish violate social and political mores; this play is revolutionary for its use of rape to function as a critique of Spanish religious policy as well. Earlier prints intimated Spanish desecration of Netherlandish religious institutions by incorporating burning churches into the background and many authors, including Orange and the anonymous author of *Political Education*, critiqued Philip and Alba for their willingness to execute innocent Christians.[111] Additionally, Calvinist ministers, Baudartius and Gijsius, disparaged the Spanish for neglecting to spare their Catholic co-religionists, rebuked them for raping nuns, and cast the Spanish as forces given over to the devil. Like these earlier sources, the *Gijsbrecht* decries the burning of churches and the murder and rape of Catholic Christians, but Vondel also powerfully connected the violation of religious institutions and the mistreatment and murder of innocent Christians to other tyrannical injustices through the metaphor of rape.

As Vondel critiqued the Spanish desecration of Dutch religious institutions and people, he carefully positioned himself between hostile groups of staunch Calvinists and Catholics. We know that Calvinist ministers were angered by Vondel's inclusion of a Catholic mass in a play meant to

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[110] Joan Landes, in her study of eighteenth-century France, convincingly argues that the use of female bodies to symbolize the nation inspires more intense patriotism because the male citizen can better imagine an intimate relationship with an attractive woman than with an impersonal state. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), see introduction and chapter 2, especially pp. 2, 22, and 79. Women were citizens insofar as they could pass on citizenship to their husbands and children, but were referred to frequently as a "citizen's daughter" suggesting that they passed on the citizenship rights of their fathers to their husbands. For information on citizenship in the Dutch Republic see Maarten Prak, "Politics of Intolerance: Citizenship and Religion in the Dutch Republic," in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*, 161–2.

[111] For an example of a burning church see the 1577 print attributed to Theodore de Bry, "Comparison of Orange and Alva with the Spanish Fury in the Background," in Horst, 183–4. For William of Orange's condemnation of the "cruel executions" of innocent Christians, see Orange, *Apologie*, ed. Mees, 60–61. The anonymous author of *Political Education* takes the stronger stance that no one should kill Christians who differ on a few matters of doctrine and that the "power over the soul is reserved to God." See *Political Education*, 196 and 210.

inaugurate the theater of the preeminent city of the officially Protestant Dutch Republic. In fact, many have wondered whether Vondel's favorable treatment of Catholic nuns and priests portended his later conversion to Catholicism. A couple of points argue against this assessment. Most visibly, in the archangel Raphael's prophecy, Vondel includes his praise of the ability of the Dutch to expel the "Romish altars."[112] In addition, Vondel did not portray all of the medieval religious characters in a positive light. One of the most incompetent is Brother Peter, who advises Gijsbrecht to stay and fight just moments before Raphael appears to encourage Gijsbrecht to flee, and who calls women fickle precisely at the moment when Gijsbrecht's wife manifests a steady determination to never leave his side.

Placing the *Gijsbrecht* among other patriotic texts of its time makes it apparent that Vondel does not yet make a stand for Catholicism. Like many of the patriots who greatly influenced his work such as Orange and the anonymous author of *Political Education*, at the time Vondel wrote the *Gijsbrecht*, he seems critical of all religious intolerance—whether Catholic or Calvinist—and supportive of a more inclusive, tolerant form of Christianity. This is likely one reason why Vondel set the play in a period when there was only one undivided, Christian Church. This is also why he dedicated the play to Grotius—a resolute defender of religious and intellectual toleration, who escaped imprisonment for his beliefs to live in exile like Gijsbrecht.[113]

Hoping to create a Dutch identity inclusive of Catholics and Protestants, Vondel asserted that the antagonists in his play (like their mutual enemy, the Spanish) betrayed God entirely. Vondel's play provided an early cue that the invading soldiers turned their backs on Christianity as a priest tells Gijsbrecht that they threatened to celebrate a profane Eucharist using his body and blood:

> You can't imagine how they spilt their gall and raged . . .
> Vilified you all year long, as with greedy teeth
> They'd tear you limb from limb!
> . . . One would gild your head to use it as a drinking-cup,
> And have it set in gold. Amazing how they shrieked,
> And passed around your blood for wine, your flesh for food,
> And quarreled for the bones, competed for your skin.[114]

[112] Vondel, 118, line 1834.
[113] See Aercke's introduction to Vondel, *Gijsbrecht*, 17–20, 34–35.
[114] Vondel, 66, lines 184–186, 189–192.

The tyrant's soldiers had hoped to sacrilege Gijsbrecht's body in a heretical anti-mass signaling their willingness to overturn everything sacred.

More vital to the play is the dramatic scene in which the antagonist Witte, illegitimate son of Count Floris, rapes Claris, a nun, and murders many more, as described at the outset of this chapter. This act of rape and murder is the vicious climax of a villain's rampage who has forced his way into the church, destroyed holy relics, set fire to the cloister, and killed a bishop all on the most sacred of Christian holidays, Christmas. In fact, as the bishop lies dying from his wounds, he denigrates his murderer thus:

> Your father reaped dishonor with one woman's rape,
> But none say that he ever feasted on her blood.
> Clear proof is this that you're just a filthy bastard
> In blood and spirit and reveal your true nature
> Toward these nuns, whom raging war has always spared.[115]

The bishop argues that Witte's crimes of rape and murder of religious women are even more egregious than his father's rape of one noblewoman. If we translate the bishop's comparison of the crimes of Floris and Witte as an appraisal of different types of tyrannical acts, Vondel's work suggests that one single act of political violation is far less horrendous than the desecration of religious institutions and persons. In this play focused on the abusive acts of tyranny, Claris' rape is the climactic, evil act symbolizing the violation of Christian morality. Considering that Claris was also Gijsbrecht's niece, her rape and murder must be viewed as yet another political attack on the rights of the nobility as well.

In the last act, Vondel more fully described the connection between the diverse forms of violation Amsterdam suffered throughout the play. Responding to the claim that the attacking general cares for him in spite of the latter's destruction of the city of Amsterdam, Gijsbrecht provides insight into a tyrant's evil motives:

> [The general, Lord Egmond] loves me in reverse. His love costs us dearly.
> Who sacked the town? Destroyed it with sword and fire?
> Who raged all night long like someone wild and frenzied?
> Who choked the Amstel's flow with corpses? Who the streets?
> Where does one not see the glow of blazing fires?
> What grave, what altar, what church has this robber's hand
> Neglected? What sanctuary, church, convent, nuns
> Have not been hurt and ravished by his filthy claws?

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[115] Vondel, 106, lines 1448–1452.

> Not to mention how atrociously this soldier
> First profanes then tortures the religious state.
> In future times they'll still speak of this with horror,
> God's angry justice will avenge it in due time.[116]

Just as the raging general and his troops demonstrate, tyrants love "in reverse." That is, they express a passion diametrically opposed to godly love. This is why all the despicable characteristics of a tyrant intertwine to motivate his mistreatment of innocent people, his disrespect of existing political traditions, and his desecration of religious institutions. It is because Vondel has this vision of the tyrant as an entirely debauched human that he can use a single crime—rape—as a symbol of all personal, political, and religious violations enacted by tyranny. It is a single ungodly passion that causes a tyrant to disregard the rules of just government, social order, and moral behavior.

It is perhaps this connection between political, social, and religious violation through the metaphor of rape that is the most effective in neutralizing the antagonistic power of religious distinctions among inhabitants of the United Provinces and in creating a single Dutch identity. In the *Gijsbrecht*, Vondel argued that their Spanish opponents were no longer Catholic, but rather were given over to the devil. By casting rapaciousness a part of the Spanish national character, he replaced nuanced disagreements about Christian doctrine and political issues with a clear-cut struggle between right and wrong. Vondel's tolerant vision for the United Provinces did not encourage discussion and debate, but rather the unthinking acceptance of the belief that Spain is a heretical enemy.

Even though this play is focused on the history of Amsterdam, Vondel offers such an attractive image of the freedom-loving Dutch ancestors that it had the potential to appeal to a broader audience. His definition claimed characteristics he believed everyone should desire: a natural moral superiority and a special relationship with God. As exemplified by Gijsbrecht and other medieval ancestors, the Dutch are devoted to God (not to a specific form of Christianity), loyal to the protection of their family members, willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of the people, and fearless opponents of any tyrants who may attempt to violate these sacred things.

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[116] Vondel, 111, lines 1610–1620.

Appeals to the Female Citizen

Through the analysis of the images of tyranny and just leadership central to the play, we can see that Vondel wrote the *Gijsbrecht* as an appeal to male citizens to protect their wives and daughters and the Dutch state imagined as a beautiful, vulnerable female. While focused on the encouragement of this male patriotism, he provides a hint of advice for how women should identify themselves with the state through the example of Gijsbrecht's wife, Badeloch. For Vondel, a married woman identifies first with her husband, and then—only through him—with the state. Vondel made it crystal clear that Badeloch's primary loyalty is to her husband. Addressing Gijsbrecht, she declares:

> Now that you're safe, all my sorrow is forgotten,
> My faithful groom, my guide, my solace, my treasure.
> Now that you're safe, what do I care for the city,
> For anything in the world![117]

This statement does not suggest that Badeloch does not care about Amsterdam's plight, but rather it emphasizes how much more intense is her love for her husband. Similarly, Badeloch explains that she would even sacrifice her children for her husband, not because she does not love them but because:

> My husband is my heart. Without him, there's no life.
> For better or worse, I won't leave without you [Gijsbrecht].
> I vowed faith and fidelity, till death may come.[118]

Badeloch's loyalty to Gijsbrecht is so intense and her identity so based upon her connection with him that she claims that she cannot continue to exist without him.

Vondel suggested that Badeloch, as a loyal wife, has the capacity to be a powerful asset to the state.[119] It is Badeloch whom the deceased Machteld visits to convey a warning to Gijsbrecht so that he may protect his family members, especially Claris, and escape the city unharmed. In this instance,

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[117] Vondel, 102, lines 1290–3.

[118] Vondel, 114.

[119] Frans-Willem Korsten has noticed this for women in Vondel's *Batavische Gebroeders of Onderdruckte Vryheit* (*Batavian Brothers or Oppressed Freedom*). He states: "We always find politically active women who offer resistance, who plead with forceful arguments for a political alternative to power through arbitrariness." Korsten, *Sovereignty As Inviolability: Vondel's Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), 166.

Badeloch is not meant to actively save the city, but is a receptive source of supernatural guidance. This does not mean that Badeloch is cowardly or unable to actively contribute to the defense of their fatherland. As long as Gijsbrecht intends to stay and fight, Badeloch proclaims that she will as well:

> All I ask for is a sword, I'm prepared to fight,
> To be struck down in battle beside my husband . . .
> Then put me to the test.
> Once heroines used to stand like rocks, unflinching.
> Renowned those women who freed their town and people!
> Your mother Baerte shows what a woman can do:
> For years she has defended castle Ysselstein.[120]

Badeloch displays a desire to fight and cites female ancestors who serve as valorous examples.[121] However, she does not fight, but instead conforms to an ideal of passivity by following Gijsbrecht into exile. Through Badeloch's bravery and fidelity, we see that Vondel's ideal Dutch heroine is a woman, fervently loyal to her husband and willing to espouse his ardently patriotic goals.

Concluding Ideas

This chapter has outlined the development of a corpus of propaganda that harnessed the power of rape to inspire the Dutch to rise up as one in order to battle menacing forces of evil. Propagandists of the early Revolt initiated this trend in the 1560s and 1570s with allegories of women who symbolized the violation of the Low Countries. Beginning in the 1580s, educated lawyers furthered this body of literature by writing learned treatises that justified the struggle by casting political violation in sexual language and by linking immoral acts of political and sexual abuse. Calvinist ministers joined the fray in the 1610s and 1620s by highlighting attacks of soldiers upon the naked, vulnerable bodies of men, women, and young and unborn children, suggesting that the enemy wanted to end the Dutch freedom-loving and God-fearing way of life. Learned Humanists incorporated many of these images into their histories and plays, a trend

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[120] Vondel, 114–115, lines 1721–28.

[121] Prandoni's study emphasizes Vondel's use of these heroines to overcome the stereotype of women as weak by calling to mind heroines of the Dutch Revolt. See Prandoni, 136–148, especially 141.

that culminated with Vondel, who ultimately employed them to inspire intense pride in the Dutch language, history, and national character.

In Vondel's *Gijsbrecht*, rape functions as a symbol of all the violations tyrants inflict upon a subject population. It stands in for the tyrannical propensity to strip people of their liberty, to transgress their rights, and to disrespect everything they hold sacred. Vondel's use of rape as a metaphor achieved two important goals. First, characterizing the Spanish enemy as rapists immediately classified them as a repugnant foe and served as a way to compel male citizens to imagine how they would feel if they witnessed their female family members or their beautiful, dear Republic threatened with rape. Second, vital for Dutch cohesion was Vondel's promulgation of an attractive national character for the people to embrace. Through his description of medieval Dutch ancestors, Vondel claims that the Dutch are Christian, freedom-loving, tolerant, family-protecting men—a vision of Dutch masculinity that appealed to many. Attaining these objectives allowed Vondel to encourage the inhabitants of the United Provinces to overlook their social, political, and religious disagreements.

Although the *Gijsbrecht's* primary focus is on the men who terrorize and struggle to save Amsterdam, Vondel provided some insight as to how women could experience patriotism. Even though he did not suggest that women actively take up the defense of the new nation as independent Dutch citizens, his view was a rather optimistic one. He valorized wives who offered to sacrifice everything in support of their patriotic husbands. Vondel's idea of a patriotic woman was of one who stays by her husband whether he stands to fight for his country or flees certain death.

The focus of this chapter has been on how a prominent Christian Humanist constructed Dutch identity in contrast to an evil, foreign outsider in order to celebrate the continued existence of the Dutch Republic in the face of great adversity. The following chapter will focus on the views of a stricter Calvinist statesman, Jacob Cats, and his attempts to construct Dutch identity through the creation of evil "others" within the Republic. In his estimation, proper Dutch men and women are not just those who oppose the Spanish, but rather they must espouse a very specific code of proper sexual behavior. We will also see that although both Vondel and Cats hold housewives in great esteem, the latter's moralistic texts are among the most pessimistic and limiting for women, and yet among the most popular of the Dutch Golden Age.

CHAPTER THREE

PROTESTANT MORALITY

In the same year Vondel finished his *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*, Calvinist moralist, Jacob Cats, published his most famous work: *The World's Beginning, Middle, and End Encapsulated in the Wedding Band, and its Touchstone*.[1] This is a laborious title for a work that assured Cats' enduring reputation as the most popular Dutch moralist of the seventeenth century. The book was a bestseller that appeared in more than ten editions and fifty thousand copies at a time when most publications seldom exceeded one thousand.[2] This title, which Cats abbreviated as *The Touchstone of the Wedding Band*, is a world history told as a series of biblical, classical, and contemporary stories of marriage spanning the period from creation to the final judgment. A dialogue between two aptly named characters frames these stories: a wise, older man, Sophronicus, and a young man who is eager to marry, named Philogamus.[3] By comparing these stories of marriage to an ideal of marriage, these characters symbolically test the metal of diverse wedding bands.

In one of the most dramatic stories in the book, a knight from Miletus named Menander violently rapes not just one, but two women. He seizes "a beautiful maiden" named Tryphose "with a terrible grip," carries her

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[1] Jacob Cats, *'s Werelts begin, midden, eynde, besloten in den trou-ringh, met den proefsteen van den selven*, (Dordrecht: voor Matthias Havius. Ghedr. by Hendrick van Esch, 1637). I will henceforth refer to this book as *The Touchstone of the Wedding Band (Proefsteen van den Trouwringh)* since that is the shortened title Cats gives for volumes two and three in his own work.

[2] Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, ed. Johan Koppenol (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), 10. Cats' other works enjoyed a similar popularity. Historians agree that Cats' books were so popular in the Dutch Republic that during the two centuries after they were published, they could be found in every Dutch house that had a Bible. J.H. Huizinga, "Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century" in *Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century, And Other Essays* ed. Johan Huizinga, Pieter Geyl, and F.W.N. Hugenholtz (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co, 1968), 65. According to Paul Dijstelberge: "Jacob Cats was misschien niet de grootste Nederlandse dichter van zijn tijd, maar hij was zonder meer de meestgelezene." Dijstelberge, "De vergeefse strijd tegen het lichaam," in *Cats Catalogus. De werken van Jacob Cats in de Short-Title Catalogue Netherlands*, ed. J. Bos and J.A. Gruys (Den Haag: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1996), 7.

[3] See Koppenol's introduction, 2.

away, and rapes her."[4] Then he overpowers a second woman, Jokaste, who tries but fails to fight him off "with all her limbs."[5] And yet when the trio appears in court, it is the rapist whom Cats expects his reader to pity:

> Menander is promptly brought in, where the curious folk awaited him with great longing. His bearing is sorrowful, his eyes cast downward. It appears that he has insufficient power to carry his own body. His hands are shackled, his head is bare, and he is told that he must kneel. There he sighs in the sand with astonishingly pale cheeks, his mouth is speechless, as if seized by death, his heart beats within, his entire body shudders. It seems that his soul already threatens to leave his body. His face is taut, his hair raised. There is a deep fright to be read in his manner. One sees a strange unrest amid his saddened breast, such that his tongue sticks in his mouth, defeated by thirst. His spirit departs in fear, his heart tightens, and causes a full death from such sorrowful expectations.[6]

Menander is the absolute picture of humility and contrition. He is so sad, weakened, vulnerable, speechless, and fearful that he is practically dead. Cats made him a pathetic and pitiful character as evidenced not only by his description, but also by the illustration of this scene (see plate 11 below).

In this image, the two women, Tryphose and Jokaste, stand tall and seem to suffer no visible harm. Jokaste, on the left of the kneeling Menander, is joyous at the opportunity to marry him, while Tryphose is angry, overstepping her bounds as a woman by swinging a sword. It is Menander, the double rapist, who is compromised, kneeling, beseeching the court to allow him to marry the willing Jokaste.

Throughout the story, Cats attempts to exonerate Menander in other ways as well. First, he calls Menander a rapist only once; other times he

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[4] "… een Ridder van Mileten … met een slimme greep Tryphose weg-gevoert, Tryphose kragt gedaen, en even sonder vragen/ Haar maagdelicke bloem ten roove weg-gedragen." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 82. Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 44, lines 43–6.

[5] "… met haar geheele leden." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 82. Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 44, lines 57–60.

[6] "Soo wort van stonden aan Menander in-gebracht, Daar hem het nieusgier volk met groot verlangen wagt. Sijn wesen is bedroeft, syn oogen neêr-geslagen, Het schijnt dat hy het lijf onmachtigh is te dragen, Sijn handen zijn geboeyt, sijn hooft is sonder hoedt; En hem wort aan-geseyt, hoe dat hy knielen moet. Daer zijgt hy in het zant met wonder bleke wangen, Sijn mont is sonder spraak, als van de doot bevangen, Sijn innig herte klopt, sijn gansche lichaam drilt, Het schijnt dat hem de ziel alreê verlaten wilt. Sijn aansigt staat gestreckt, sijn hairen op-geresen, Daar is een diepe schrick in sijn gebaer te lesen. Men siet een vreemt gewoel ontrent sijn droeve borst, Soo dat syn tonge kleeft, verwonnen van den dorst. Syn geest verdwijnt in angst, sijn herte gaat versmagten, En schept een volle doot uyt so een droef verwagten." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 82. Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 45, lines 71–86.

Plate 11. Court Scene from "Two Raped and Both Marry" in Jacob Cats, *Complete Works* (Amsterdam: Jan van Heekeren et al., 1712), II, 83.

refers to him by name or as "young man." This is different than the way Cats identifies the young women by their defining characteristics. Jokaste, who wants to marry her rapist, is called "cheerful, sweet, and soft" and "the one who is apt to forgive."[7] With Tryphose, who wants Menander executed, Cats walks a fine line between praising her virtue and critiquing her desire for retribution; the text frequently describes her in negative terms, such as 'strict' or 'severe'.[8] The author's unequal attention toward the characters is also telling. In his story of Menander, Tryphose, and Jokaste, sixteen lines describe the rapist's pain and sadness and only one line (out of a total of sixteen lines describing both women) mentions that one of the women suffers emotionally.

[7] S.F. Witstein emphasizes that these are positive descriptions for a woman. These descriptions also include "een vrolick wesen . . ." and "haar soeten aart." S.F. Witstein, "Menanders pleidooi," *De nieuwe taalgids* 60 (1967): 313–327. See also Sneller, *Met man en macht*, 170–4.

[8] These less positive descriptions include: "Een maagt van streng gelaat," ". . . daar is strenge tucht in haar gesicht te lessen," "fier gelaat," "strenge maegt," "uw fellen aart."

In part, this story is an exercise in rhetoric. Cats chose a classical story centered upon a fictitious law that allowed a raped woman to decide the fate of her rapist in order to create a legal conundrum: what happens when one woman wants to marry her rapist and the other wants him to be executed? Cats modeled the speeches of the two female characters in the *Controversiae* of Seneca the Elder (the father of the renown philosopher), but importantly it is the defense of the rapist that is unique to Cats' story. While the *Controversiae* offers no word in support of Menander, Cats allowed this character to eloquently employ all the tools of rhetoric to transform himself from a guilty rapist to a contrite young man.[9]

The crucial question here is why a strict Calvinist like Cats would want his reader to pity a rapist—even as a rhetorical exercise—when elsewhere he made it exceedingly clear that rape is morally reprehensible.[10] How did he attempt to convince his reader that rape is not so bad? This chapter will reveal that, much like Vondel's *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*, Cats employed stories of rape in his literary works to reinforce specific social, religious, and political goals. While Vondel's objective was to promote an inclusive sense of Dutch identity based on a tolerant understanding of Christian ethics, Cats wrote to teach ordinary men and women how to strictly apply Reformed doctrine to their everyday lives and to readily accept the limitations it placed upon them. More specifically, Cats employed stories of rape to inspire subordinate members of society to accept their subordination—to aspiring patriarchs like Menander—in a system that privileged the wealthy over the poor, men over women, parents over children, and married men and women over single men and single women.

Dutch Pietism and Domestic Conduct Books

Although few enjoyed success as remarkable as his, Cats is a good example of the opportunities that were open to middle-class men, especially during the first half of the seventeenth century in the Dutch Republic. Born to a well-to-do family in Zeeland, he studied in Leiden and Orleans,

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[9] Both Witstein and Sneller note Cats' reformulation of Seneca's work. Sneller further investigates Cats' attempts to exonerate Menander. Sneller, 171–4. See also Koppenol, 5. Maguire notes that at least one early modern school required pupils to prove their debate skills by arguing both sides of a different classical story of rape—that of Helen of Troy. See Maguire, 94.

[10] Even at another point in this play, he states: "He who violates a maiden is not worthy of life." "Wie jonge maagden schent en is geen leven wart." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 86.

and visited Paris and England before becoming a lawyer in The Hague and subsequently in Middelburg. Cats served as pensionary, or leading functionary and representative, of Dordrecht before he was appointed at age fifty-nine to the highest bureaucratic position of the United Provinces, that of grand pensionary.[11] Not content with only an illustrious career as a jurist and powerful government official, he was also a prolific author. He translated theological opinions formulated by a particular group of Reformed authors into concrete, practical advice for less well-educated Dutch men and women.[12]

Cats' desire to detail how reformed Christian practice should impact everyday life is characteristic of the *Nadere Reformatie*, a religious movement akin to and influenced by English Puritanism.[13] This movement's Dutch proponents, including Zeeland ministers Willem Teelinck (1579–1629) and Godefridus Udemans (1581–1649), cherished the teachings of Calvin and other early reformers, and wanted to extend and purify the sixteenth-century movement by opposing abuses of reformed theology, encouraging the inner experience of doctrine, and seeking the total sanctification of all spheres of life.[14]

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[11] W.J.A. Jonckbloet, 'II. Jakob Cats' in *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche letterkunde. Deel 4: De zeventiende eeuw* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1890). See also Pieter Geyl, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandse Stam* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1948), 388.

[12] He explains that his goal for *The Wedding Band and Its Touchstone* was to provide "our fellow countrymen with something amusing and good to read, and thereby make them more suited to domestic and civic life." Cats, *Proefsteen van den Trou-Ringh* (Schiedam: Roelants, 1858), 30–31. In this interpretation of Cats' works as a social program to teach his fellow citizens, I follow the ideas of Boekema-Sciarone and Loonen and J. Kluiver, "Het gezin in de Gouden Eeuw. De op- en aanmerkingen van Vader Cats," *Bulletin van de Werkgroep Historie en Archeologie onder Auspiciën van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen* 28 (1978): 49–62.

[13] Some scholars have thus translated *Nadere Reformatie* as "further Reformation," "continuing Reformation," or "second Reformation." The difficulty in translation lies in the fact that English does not have a satisfactory equivalent of "*nadere*." Many scholars have referred to these Dutch Calvinists influenced by English Puritanism at the beginning of the seventeenth century as Pietists. Joel Beeke, however, cautions us that this endemic Dutch movement should not be confused with the later German Pietists. Van der Heijden, *Huwelijk in Holland* . . . , 42–44. See F.A. van Lieburg, *De Nadere Reformatie in Utrecht ten tijde van Voetius: sporen in de gereformeerde kerkeraadsacta* (Rotterdam: Lindenberg, 1989), 15; Joel R. Beeke, *Assurance of Faith: Promises, Inward Evidences, and the Spirit's Witness* (Millgrove, ON: Free Reformed Student Society, 1994).

[14] L.F. Groendijk, *De Nadere Reformatie van het gezin: de visie van Petrus Wittewrongel op de christelijke huishouding* (Dordrecht: Van Den Tol, 1984). W.J. op 't Hof defines Reformed pietism as "that movement within Reformed Protestantism which, battling against what it saw as widespread abuses and false doctrines, advocated with prophetic zeal the inner experience of sound doctrine and personal holiness, as well as the radical and total sanctification of all areas of life. W.J. op 't Hof, *Het Gereformeerd Pietisme* (Houten: Den

It was in the early years of the seventeenth century that this religious movement caught Cats' attention. He first encountered the ideas of influential Puritans, such as William Perkins and William Gouge, during his extended visit to England in 1602.[15] He then moved to Middelburg in 1603, married Elisabeth van Valkenburg, reformed his life after her pious example, and became an official member of the Reformed Church in 1607—six months before the birth of their first child.[16] For the twenty years he lived in Middelburg, Cats was in close contact with like-minded advocates of this form of Dutch Pietism, such as Teelinck, minister of Middelburg, and his brother Eewoud, who was known for his Pietist pamphlets and with whom Cats served as a church elder.[17] This religious impulse motivated Cats to develop a distinct literary tradition in collaboration with many poets and artists of Zeeland that opposed the secular humanism of Hooft and Vondel's Amsterdam circle.[18]

According to its advocates, one of the most important ways this "continuing" Reformation was to be achieved was through the reformation of the family. Jean Taffin, French-speaking court minister for William of Orange and an early representative of this religious movement, advised that families be transformed into small churches so that virtue could be inculcated from the very beginning of every Dutch person's life.[19] Teelinck demonstrates how literally these religious men understood this charge.

Hertog, 2005), 126. T. Brienen offers a similar definition in Brienen, *De Nadere reformatie: beschrijving van haar voornaamste vertegenwoordigers* ('s-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1986).

[15] P.J. Meertens, *Letterkundig Leven in Zeeland in de zestiende en de eerste helft der zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeverij, 1943), 181. K. ter Laan, *Letterkundig woordenboek voor Noord en Zuid* (Den Haag and Djakarta: G.B. van Goor Zonen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1952), 89. Bos and Gruys, 24.

[16] Heidi de Mare, *Huiselijk Taferelen: de veranderende rol van het beeld in de Gouden Eeuw* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2012), 20. Domien Ten Berge, *De hooggeleerde en zoetvloeiende dichter Jacob Cats*. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 34.

[17] Meertens, 171. See also W.J. op 't Hof, *Willem Teellinck (1579–1629): leven, geschriften en invloed* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 2008).

[18] One manifestation of this collaboration is the publication entitled *Zeeuuse Nachtegael* (Middelburg, Ian Pietersz vande Venne, 1623). See Jonckbloet, "IV. Buiten Amsterdam" in *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche letterkunde*, Meertens, 291.

[19] Taffin, 216. See also Linde. This sentiment is repeated in William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Dvties* (1622), 18 and in Willem Teelinck's *Noodwendig Vertoog* (1627), 192. See also Teelinck, *Huys-boeck, ofte Eenvoudighe verclaringhe ende toe-eygheninghe, van de voornaemste vraegh-stucken des Nederlandtschen christelijcken catechism* (Middelburg, 1639). W.J. op 't Hof, "Willem Teelinck in het licht zijner geschrijften," *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 2 (1978): 97–105. Groendijk, 23.

He exhorted fathers to minister to their families by teaching scripture and leading the household in religious services and fasting.[20] By sincerely reforming the most essential unit of the Republic—the family—Dutch Pietists hoped to revitalize the entire church and state. The family was, after all, a small state unto itself, and thus the most basic building block of the orderly, godly society they hoped to create.

To effect this reformation of the family, a number of these Dutch Pietists published domestic conduct books to elucidate what scripture taught about marriage and the family. The ideas of early reformers such as Desiderius Erasmus, Martin Luther, Calvin, and Heinrich Bullinger, were very influential upon these later works, as were those of English Puritans, Perkins and Gouge. Pietists who exerted great influence on Cats' works include Taffin, Cats' fellow residents of Middelburg, ministers Udemans, Teelinck, and the most influential lay Pietist Johannes de Swaef (1594–1653), and minister of Breda, Lodewyck G. van Renesse (1599–1671).[21] This is by no means an exhaustive list of authors who impacted Cats' works, but one that demonstrates Cats' engagement with this strain of religious reform.

Cats' own domestic conduct books, *Marriage* (1625), *Touchstone of the Wedding Band* (1638), and *Maidens' Duty* (1618), owe a great deal to these religious works in content. This is not immediately evident because his creations are utterly different in format and style. Cats translated the Pietists' spiritual advice into stories, poetry, and dialogues. But most importantly, he maintained the socially conservative message of these works that labored to maintain the existing, and in their opinion, God-ordained hierarchy.[22] This desire to preserve the social ranks informed all of Cats' stories and manifests itself in his understandings of husbandly

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[20] Teelinck, *Den Christeliicken Leytsman . . .* (1618).

[21] Groendijk compiles this list of influential English Puritans and Dutch Pietists. Groendijk, 45. Jean Taffins' *Van de Boetveerdicheyt des levens* (1595), William Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie* (1609) (translated into Dutch in 1614 as *De Christelyke Huys-Regeringe*), as well as Zacharias Ursinius and Festus Hommius, *Schatboek* (1602), which is a Dutch edition of the Heidelberg Catechism, Godefridus Udemans, *Practycke* (1612), Johannes de Swaef, *De Geestelycke Queeckerye* (1621), Gouge, *Of Domesticall Dvties* (1622), Teelinck, *Noodwendigh Vertoog* (1627), and Lodewyck G. van Renesse, *Het Voorsienigheyt God in 't beleyt der Houwelicken* (1639). The Pietist ideas were later elaborated by Middelburg native, minister in Amsterdam Petrus Wittewrongel in his *Oeconomia Christiana, ofte, Christelicke huys-houndinge* (1655). For more on the interrelations between these men see Meertens, *Letterkundig leven in Zeeland*. For biographical information see D. Nauta, *Biografisch lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlands protestantisme* (Kampen: Kok, 1978). See also Israel, 531.

[22] These authors most frequently cite Ephesians 5 and 6 and I Corinthians 6:15.

authority, wifely submission, and filial obedience. We must briefly examine the Pietists' understanding of hierarchy and the relationships between family members to assess their impact on Cats' work.

To teach the Dutch to respect the social hierarchy, many of these authors of the "continuing" reformation expanded their discussion of the fifth commandment to enjoin all inferiors to revere and obey all superiors. Udemans elucidated why these authors extended the command that children honor their father and mother to other power relations: "fatherly lordship (*vaderlijcke heerschappije*) serves as a pattern . . . that all other lordships (*heerschappijen*) must follow."[23] In support of this hierarchy, Taffin contended that those in power commanded respect because all power comes from God.[24] Inferiors must revere God's power in those God made superior. Udemans repeated this claim and advised all people to be content with their status for God is the enemy of disorder.[25] Gouge emphasized that God created the existing hierarchy for the good of all people and that power is actually a burden that weighs most heavily on those God put in charge.[26] In many of these authors' works, the social hierarchy resembles a hierarchy of virtue. They imply that God favors the virtuous with positions of power so that they will work "rather for the good of their subjects than for their own honor."[27]

These domestic conduct books also extensively detailed the nature of wifely submission. Invariably citing the apostle Paul as Calvin had done, all these ministers admonished wives to submit to their husbands, as the husband is the head of the wife.[28] Taffin, Hommius, and Gouge added that wives should also fear their husbands on the grounds that the husband is the image of God.[29] According to Taffin, Udemans, and Gouge, wives should demonstrate obedience by subjecting their will to their husbands'. Gouge cited Genesis 3:16, "thy desire shall be subject to thine husband."[30] Taffin took this a step further by advising women to subject their emotions to their husbands' as well.[31]

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[23] Udemans, 235.
[24] Taffin, 220 verso.
[25] Udemans, 242–3, 252.
[26] Gouge, 6, 27, 23.
[27] Gouge, 6.
[28] Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, I Corinthians 6:15; Bullinger, 54 verso; Taffin, 129; Udemans, 335; Hommius, 367; Gouge, 27, 31, 34, 77.
[29] Taffin, 129; Hommius, 367; Gouge, 10.
[30] Gouge, 25.
[31] Taffin, 197 verso, Udemans, 335. Cats adopts this idea that women should subject not only their will, but also their emotions to their husbands. In his version of the story of

Conversely, and commonly mentioned by Calvin and Pietist authors alike, the husband's duty was to love his wife as Christ loves the Church.[32] A husband had to provide for his wife and protect her.[33] In accordance with the desire to transform homes into small churches, Pietists advised each husband to provide for his wife's soul by teaching her scripture, by encouraging her to be holy, and according to Gouge, acting as her savior.[34] Udemans demanded that a husband identify and cease his own sinful behavior in order to be the spiritual leader of the home. Further, husbands should respect the wife's authority in the home and heed a wife when she advises him in a friendly manner.[35]

While the relationship between spouses was asymmetric insofar as wives owed husbands obedience and husbands owed wives love, these domestic conduct books focused a great deal on the reciprocal goodwill each spouse should demonstrate toward the other.[36] They advised spouses to be friendly to one another, to encourage one another to love God and to do good works, to pray together, to help one another maintain the children and the home, to be humble, and to be tolerant of one another's shortcomings.[37] This emphasis on mutual love and goodwill supports the compelling argument that husbands and wives enjoyed a far more companionable relationship in the seventeenth century than they did before the Reformation, as posited by Stone, Edward Shorter, and many other modern historians. However, as Gouge made explicit, one of the motives the husband had for treating the wife well was to make her subjection bearable. In his words:

Joseph and Potiphar's wife, he states: "The man is the head, and therefore it is not necessary to continually wonder about the desire of the women. Between man and wife, I pray you, make distinction. Because all the women are to do is exercise their husbands' will. In case you seek the way to be clear in this, think that an honorable wife must be just like a mill; Which now or nevermore turn her arms like fins only as the wind powerfully turns them. The business of the woman is exactly like this, she must never move her arms of her own will, but must wait on her husband, and be turned according to his sign, whether still or hard he blows. If your husband sits and is uncertain, is overcome by sorrow, then it is certainly no time to come to milling. Make sure you continually wait for his moods; be sad if he is grieving and happy when he laughs." Cats, "Self-Stryt," *Alle de Wercken*, I, 189.

32 Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, Eph 5:25, 28; Bullinger, 54; Taffin, 200; Perkins, 123; Udemans, 334; Hommius 367; Gouge, 45.

33 Taffin, 200; Perkins, 123; Udemans, 334; Hommius, 367.

34 Taffin, 190, 200, Udemans, 334; de Swaef, 112; Gouge, 79.

35 Udemans, 334; Hommius, 367.

36 Gouge makes this point explicitly: husbands must love their wives and wives must fear their husbands. Gouge, 128.

37 Bullinger, 53; Taffin, 187, 190; Teelinck, *Noodwendig Vertoog*, 201; Udemans, 336; Hommius, 367, 416.

> [The husband] ought to make her a joint Governour of the family with himself, and referre the ordering of many things to her discretion, and with al honourable and kinde respect to carrie himself towards her . . . [Then] his wife can have no just cause to complaine of her subjection.[38]

The husband had to love his wife, delegate some of his authority to her, and show her kindness so that she could happily bear her subjection to him. This is representative of how domestic conduct books advised patriarchs to enact their considerable authority through a model of companionate marriage.

This is the very crux of conduct book authors' socio-political program. They emphasized mutual love and service between husbands and wives, parents and children, and all inferiors and superiors in what was certainly an attempt to create a benevolent patriarchy. But it was also an insidious policy insofar as it asked subordinates to submit cheerfully and to police their own behavior in exchange for compassion. In this sense, Pietists, including Cats, encouraged wives to become agents of their own submission.[39] Dutch women's historian, Sneller, applied this argument to Cats' corpus. She contended that Cats attempted to shape the "moral attitude of women" so that "women themselves formulated their oppression to men, especially their husbands, as the most desirable state of life."[40] This does not suggest that Cats was a misogynist; on the contrary, he championed women in many ways as demonstrated by his lifelong devotion to his wife, his intellectual companionships with literary women including Johanna Coomans and Anna Roemers Visscher, and his successful legal defense of two accused witches.[41] As we examine Cats' use of rape narratives, we will consider how he adapted Reformed advice and how he promulgated rules regarding rape and other sexual contacts to preserve existing social hierarchies.[42]

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[38] Gouge, dedication.

[39] See Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475–1640* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982). See the conclusion in Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality*, 263–4.

[40] Sneller, "Reading Jacob Cats," in *Women of the Golden Age*, ed. Kloek, et al., 31. Further analysis of both Cats and Beverwijk is in Sneller, *Met man en macht*.

[41] Gerard Knuvelder, *Handboek tot de geschiedenis der Nederlandse letterkunde*. Deel 2 Fifth ed. ('s Hertogenbosch: L.C.G Malmberg, 1971), 289. Of his wife, Cats wrote in the preface to the *Proefsteen van de Trouwringh*: "Mijn werd' Elisabeth, ick wil u eygen blijven Tot my de bleecke doot de leden sal verstijven." *Alle de Wercken*, II, B1 recto.

[42] Wiesner-Hanks argues more widely that sex has long been a means of conserving particular hierarchies: "The centrality of sex to the preservation of boundaries is something that nearly all human societies have recognized. They have developed laws and norms

Rape and Social Status

When the early Reformers and Pietist ministers wrote about rape, it earned only a brief description, frequently in the context of the seventh commandment as an abomination that God punishes.[43] In contrast, Cats elevated rape to a major theme in his marital advice books. This certainly suited his goal of providing his fellow Dutch with something exciting to read; Cats' stories are more sensational than the Pietist ministers' prose instructions. But how is this material spiritually edifying? Cats did not simply employ rape as the antithesis of marriage so that it could serve as an example of what not to do. In fact, because Cats believed that earthly marriages could not be perfect due to human depravity, he focused on rape to show how best to repair human mistakes. Cats advised women and men to seek marriage as a rectification of rape. On the one hand, his advice demonstrated a desire to provide materially for raped women and the potentially illegitimate children that these women may conceive as a result of rape. On the other hand, Cats' advice consistently favored wealthy, powerful, older men at the expense of poorer and younger men and women. He employed rape narratives not to point out the heinousness of rape and the need to eradicate it, but rather to buttress an unstable patriarchal order with additional support.[44]

While the rules for a proper marriage in the seventeenth-century Netherlands had been carefully elaborated, conceptions of rape were less straightforward. As the brief survey of rape law in the introduction reveals, rape was construed variously as a terrible crime, a youthful escapade, and a way to attain a wife. The distinction between these extremes rested on many factors, none more important than the social status of the rapist and his victim. As George Vigarello and Sharon Block demonstrated in their studies of eighteenth-century France and America respectively, the basis of law was not to ensure equal treatment, but rather to legitimize

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regarding marriage and other sexual contacts, both to keep their group distinct from others and to preserve hierarchies within the group." Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality*, 255.

[43] Calvin, *Sermons on 2 Samuel*, ed. Douglas Kelly (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), 627–628; Bullinger, 20; Taffin, 212; Udemans, 303, 326; Hommius, 400, 403.

[44] Modern theorist Renee Heberle contends that the frequent reiteration that women are vulnerable to rape empowers unstable regimes of masculinist domination. Heberle, "Deconstructive Strategies and the Movement against Sexual Violence," *Hypatia: A Journal Of Feminist Philosophy* 11 (1996): 63–76. The application of Roper's assessment that "the Reformation articulated deep anxieties about masculinity and femininity" can also explain the timing of Cats' work. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, 38–47.

the power relations of the hierarchical order. Legal historian Sjoerd Faber found evidence for this inequitable treatment of different classes before the law in the Dutch Republic as well. He revealed that the majority of the people who appeared before the courts came from the lower middle to lower strata of society, while courts called only a handful of upper middle- and upper-class men and women.[45] In determining guilt in cases of rape, Vigarello succinctly stated: "Rank was decisive."[46] Powerful men could rape women with impunity, whereas the poverty of a rapist increased the seriousness of his crime. Block explained that, given the social and racial hierarchies in place in colonial America, this meant that many more black men were charged with the rapes of well-to-do white women whereas wealthy, powerful, white men were more likely to go unpunished.[47] Marc Wingens similarly found that Dutch courts ignored wealthy young students' sexual misdeeds in Leiden during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries so long as the victims were of lower status.[48]

The social and economic status of a rapist was also decisive in determining guilt and innocence in Cats' domestic conduct books. He proposed that certain unsavory (*onguer*) people at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum should avoid marriage altogether so as not to propagate their failings. The word he used denotes low status through its connotations of 'improper' and 'uncivilized'. For these members of society, Cats offered no leeway if tried for rape. Cats' dialogist, Sophronicus, instructs his young companion, Philogamus, that there are distinctions that one needs to make in answering the question of whether a violated woman should marry her rapist:

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[45] Faber describes these lower-middle- and lower-class people as: lower-class sailors, servants, people who worked with their hands, and people without work. Faber, 229–235, 260–267. See also Spierenburg, 101.

[46] Vigarello, 17–19.

[47] Block asserts that a man's position in the social and racial hierarchy determined whether or not he was seen as a believable rapist and a woman's race and position often determined whether she was seen as a believable rape victim. Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[48] Wingens, 13. In this context, an optimistic analysis of Christiaen van Couwenbergh's 1632 painting of three young white men raping a black woman is that it served to critique the debauchery of student life and the existing social and racial hierarchies where men could commit such crimes with impunity. More likely is that Couwenbergh merely catalogued what kind of sexual violence went unpunished when African women were transformed into objects. See Albert Blankert, *Hollands Classicisme: in de zeventiende-eeuwse schilderkunst* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 1999), 156–159. Wolfthal, 189–197.

> . . . [I]t can happen, that a woman can be raped against her will by a wretch, a highwayman, or other criminal scum. Shall someone in this case advise her, only because she was raped, to take such a reckless person for her husband? In my opinion, no . . . [B]eing mindful of the common good, and to prevent such vileness, I judge it better to grant no marriage, but punishment to the abductor.[49]

Cats thus denied certain low-class, criminal men access to sex altogether, whether coerced or consensual in the best interest of individual women and their communities.[50]

Conversely, Sophronicus advises his pupil Philogamus and their audience that high status is enough to make men eligible for the forgiveness of rape:

> . . . [I]f violence is done to her virtue by a young man who was previously thought to be honest, her social equal or close to her in social status, and who did such a thing out of impatience of love, or through one or another sudden occurrence, it may happen in this case that the woman be advised to preferably live in marriage with the aforementioned instead of living her entire life in a sorrowful state.[51]

Thus, rape could be a way for a man to attain a wife so long as he had been a suitable prospect for marriage in the first place. This fits with Cats' requirement that a prospective husband be his potential bride's social equal: "each should marry his like, young with young and rich with rich."[52]

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[49] "Want het kan gebeuren, dat eenig vrouw-mensch wert tegen haren danck onteert van een onverlaet, van een struyck-rover, ofte eenig ander schuym van boeven; soude haer in dien gevalle wel iemant willen raden, alleen om datse verkracht is, soodanigen roeckeloosen mensche tot haeren man te nemen? Voor my, ick meyne neen . . . Anders, ten goede van het gemeene beste, en tot weeringe van soodanige vuyligheden, oordeel ick beter te wesen, dat geen houwelick, maer straffe, den schaker oyt toe en kome." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 8.

[50] Lyndal Roper's study of sixteenth-century Augsburg shows a similar connection of hierarchy and sexual subordination. Within household workshops, subordinate journeymen, apprentices, and servants were denied the ability to marry and thus the concrete economic advantages of inheritance at the time of marriage and the benefit of their wives' work providing "food, light, bedding, heat, water, and other domestic needs of the shop's small labour force." Roper, *The Holy Household*, 31–2.

[51] "Maer indien aen de andere zijde haer in hare eerbaerheyt geweldt ware gedaen, door een jongeling te voren voor eerlick gehouden, en haer ofte ontrent haers gelijck, en die sulcks, door ongedult van liefde, ofte anders door den eenen ofte den anderen schielicken inval, mochte bestaen hebben, in dien gevalle soude soodanigen vrouw-mensch konnen werden geraden, sich liever in howelick met den selven te versellen, als haer geheele vordere leven in dien droevigen staet over te brengen." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 87–88.

[52] Boekema-Sciarone and Loonen 38, fn 45: Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, III, 22. See also J.J.H. Dekker "Beauty and Simplicity: The Power of Fine Art in Moral Teaching on Education in Seventeenth-Century Holland," *Journal of Family History* 34 (2009): 166–188, especially 171.

He followed Calvin's advice that spouses should be of comparable age, and social and economic status, which as Perkins explains, will prevent disturbances in the social hierarchy.[53] For Cats, determining whether a marriage should follow rape is not based on whether the woman in question consents, but rather on the insistence that neither rape nor marriage disrupt the existing social order. However, we can also see that Cats believed his advice was good for the raped woman as well since he saw only two options for her: marriage or "living her entire life in a sorrowful state."

One can see the importance of status in the outcome of Cats' story "Two Raped and Both Married." The court's decision to deal mercifully with the rapist, Menander, is due in great part to his social standing:

> I was born a nobleman in this land, and I have not lost my parents' luster. If only I had reined in my capricious ignorance, I would now have married the best of the land . . . I am a knight, and . . . my bad deed did not touch a virgin of higher status. We were raised in the same region, of similar descent, and of equal wealth.[54]

It is not only important that Menander is of the same high status as the women he raped; Jokaste's social standing is also important in determining the outcome of the case. In her argument that Menander should be executed, Tryphose accuses Jokaste of being an unchaste, lower noblewoman:

> What more does a man who wants to violate maidens
> And foully hunt the young animals have to do,
> Other than simply violate any woman or virgin,
> And then send a slut from the lower nobility?[55]

Tryphose's accusation was potentially damaging since even as a victim of rape Jokaste has to be Menander's social equal in order to be considered

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[53] Witte and Kingdon, 106. Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie* (1609), 64. Haks, 106.

[54] "Ick ben hier in het lant een edelman geboren, En van mijn ouders glans en heb ick niet verloren. Had ick maer ingetoomt mijn grilligh onverstant, Ick hadde nu getrout de beste van het landt . . . ick een ridder ben, en . . . dat mijn stoute daet/ Niet aen en heeft geroert een maeght van hooger staet. Wy sijn in een gewest te samen opgetogen, En van gelijcken stam, en even van vermogen." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 83.

[55] "Wat heeft hy meer te doen die vrysters wil schoffieren, En plegen vuyl bejag ontrent de jonge dieren, Als dat hy, waer hy kan, maer vrou en maagden schent, En dan eens om een sloir van minder Adel sent?" Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 84.

eligible to marry him.[56] Thus for Jokaste, it is important to contest these claims. She says: "It is not the truth, that only you were raped, and that I am a slut brought into this case . . . Let judgment safely pass sentence, in nobility, honor, or wealth I am not inferior to any."[57] Her defense allows her to prove her eligibility for marriage and conforms to Cats' ideal that marriage should occur between a man and woman of similar economic status.

While Cats believed that unsavory men should not marry or get away with rape and that sex between men and women of different social standings should not be rectified by marriage, he proposed that wealthy and powerful men are eligible for forgiveness for rape. According to Cats, single, wealthy men should be allowed to marry the women they rape and suffer no ill consequences, in part because of their ability to persuade women after the rape through expensive gifts. He demonstrated this in his story of the Benjamite abduction of the women of Shiloh:

> That is how it goes with the abducted maidens, They are . . . first sad and unwilling, but afterwards happy. In order to achieve this, every man does whatever he can think of. He speaks all the time of buying . . . and giving away all sorts of womanly possessions, clothing, [and] jewelry. All that the young prize and find pleasing. Many go up on the land and speak with the women, of a beautiful house or about building another canal . . . Another leads his sweetie, and shows her beautiful, wide roads and large tracts of land, given to him by fate. He points out all that the eye can see, and says: Of all this I am king and you are queen . . . Because the men comported themselves thus, after a few days, people found that many women became pregnant . . . through which the young women were bonded to the man. He added himself to her bed; he thanked her for her fruitfulness.[58]

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[56] As Vigarello pointed out for eighteenth-century France, the rank of both the victim and the assailant is decisive in determining the outcome of the case. Vigarello, 17.

[57] " 'T is dan de waerheyt niet, dat ghy maer zijt verkracht, En dat ick als een sloir word in het spel gebracht. Ick ben een eenigh kint. Laet vry het oordeel strijcken; In adel, eer, of goet [rijkdom] en wil ick niemant wijcken." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 56, lines 523–526.

[58] "Dus even gaen te werck de weg-gevoerde vrijsters, Sy doen in dit geval gelijck gevange lijsters. Sy varen met de mans, sy rijden door het lant, Eerst droef en ongesint, maer vrolick naderhant. Hier toe doet yder man al wat hy kan bedencken, Hy spreekt schier alle tijt van kopen, geven schencken. Van alle vrouwen-tuyg, van kleeren, van cieraet, En wat de jonckheyt prijst en wel te sinne staet. Veel gaet'er op het lant, en spreken met de vrouwen, Hoe eenig cierlick huys of ander slot te bouwen, . . . En ander leyt sijn lief, en toont haer schoone dreven, En groote streken lants, hem by het lot gegeven. Hy wijst al wat het oog van daer bereycken kan, En seyt: Hier ben ick Vorst en gy Vorstinne van . . . Maer onder dit beslag, en naer een weynig dagen, Soo vont men menig wijf die kint begon te dragen . . . .Waer door de jonge vrou wert aen den man verbonden, Hy voegt hem

It was the Benjamites' ability to bestow lavish gifts that convinced the women of Shiloh to consent to marry their abductors. Cats' description here suggests that the Benjamites successfully won the women over before consummating their marriages. Their ability to gain women's consent through gifts is an extension of the convention in courtship that suitors offer material compensation in exchange for women's affections.[59]

This story demonstrates that these husbands are worthy due to their wealth, but also because of their ability to impregnate the women and provide for their children. According to Cats in the above text, the unborn child is a bond between the man and the woman. Sophronicus explains that the birth of children absolves the abduction:

> How now! You do not think that the abduction is being avenged too late, when violence has turned to love, and the abduction transformed to marriage? Yes, even more so when children are produced out of that same marriage? What good is it to avenge the stolen virginity, if those who were then maidens have become wives, even mothers?[60]

Thus, according to Cats, a man's eligibility for forgiveness is based on his status as a potential patriarch—that is, he must be wealthy and capable of fathering children.[61] Once a man is in fact the head of a family, Cats suggested that it is better to honor the existence of that family irrespective of how it came into being.

Although he does not explain precisely which men he considered worthy of marriage after rape, other pamphlets and diaries written by Cats' high-status contemporaries are instructive. These sources commonly divide society into three parts: "rulers, common citizens, and 'the mob'

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tot haer bed, hy danckt haer van de vrugt…" Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 57–8, lines 559–568, 575–578, 587–588, 596–597. Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 36.

[59] Karras notes that because heterosexual relations were inherently venal (in so far as men offered gifts to initiate sexual relationships with women) the line between courtship and commercial sexual transactions was blurred. See Karras, "Sex and the Singlewoman," in *Singlewomen*, ed. Bennett and Froide, 133–5. Cats' example demonstrates that material compensation could also make it difficult to distinguish consentual and forced sex. In this instance women are convinced to have sex for money; that is, the abductors convince the women of Shilo to consent through the same kinds of gifts usually offered in courtship.

[60] "Hoe! Dunckt u niet dat het ontschaken al te laet gewroken wort, soo wanneer het gewelt alreede in liefde, en het wegh-woeren in een howelick verandert is? Ja soo wanneer dat alreede uyt dat selvige houwelick kinderen sijn voortgekomen? Wat baet 'et doch de genomen Maeghdom te gaen wreken, als die gene, die onlanghs Maeghden waren, tot vrouwen ja moeders geworden sijn?" Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 37.

[61] See Carole Pateman's definition of classic patriarchalism. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 24–5.

(*regenten, burgers, and gemeen or grauw*)."[62] It is likely that Cats' leniency extended to only the rulers and the upper middle class. These families had sufficient resources for the wife to work in the home and were thus able to aspire to the vision of domesticity that Cats disseminated in his advice manuals. His political agenda particularly favored the elite—those powerful families who came to control lucrative positions in the administration of the Republic by the middle of the seventeenth century.

Cats not only advised society to offer forgiveness to wealthy rapists, he also contended that a woman may reasonably choose to marry her rapist because accepting one's fate is a virtue. For example, once raped, Jokaste weighs her options as follows:

> What better can I do in such a damaged case?
> It is wisdom to make a virtue out of necessity.
> Even the wisest man does this;
> If he cannot do as he wants, he must do what he can.[63]

Jokaste recognizes that she has limited control over her own body, that she should be pragmatic, and decides that the more certain option is to marry the man who took her virginity. Cats' suggestion here that men also find themselves in situations they cannot control reminds us that the seventeenth-century Dutch often had far lower expectations of control and expected to be forced to do a great number of things.[64] In accordance with

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[62] Van Nierop, "Popular Participation in Politics in the Dutch Republic," in *Resistance, Representation, and Community*, ed. Peter Blickle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 278. Cited by Phillips, 33. Using Prak's numbers for the city of Zwolle (which are instructional in spite of the variation among Dutch towns) the rulers correspond roughly to the elite and upper-middle class, which made up about 8–10 percent of the population. These groups were comprised of regents who controlled lucrative administrative positions in the Republic, as well as industrial and merchant capitalists, and noblemen. The middle-class includes merchants, brokers, shopkeepers, master craftsmen, intellectuals, and militiamen. It made up somewhere between 20–30 percent of the population and comprised the group of common citizens. The 'mob' likely includes the working class (approximately 35–50 percent of the population) and the bottom 20–25 percent of the population, who were domestic servants and the underemployed poor. Prak, 139. See also Van Deursen, *Plain Lives*, part I. See Israel, 337 for more on the Dutch nobility.

[63] "Wat kan ick beter doen in soo verboste saken? 'T Is wijsheyt, van de noot een deught te konnen maken. Dit wort alsoo betracht oock by den wijsten man; Magh hy niet soo hy wil, hy doet gelijck hy kan." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 57, lines 545–548.

[64] Evelyn Birge Vitz makes this point about the middle ages, but it is also valid in this later period. See Vitz, "Rereading Rape in Medieval Literature: Literary, historical, and theoretical reflection," *Romanic Review* 88 (1997): 1–26. See also the introduction of Laiou, vii–ix, especially: "What varies, and is therefore historically significant, is the weight that each society places on individual consent, the limits it imposes upon it, and the validity it recognizes to measures or acts of coercion."

Calvin's teachings, no one should "endeavor to avoid subjection . . . even kings and governors."[65] Rather, all humans should submit themselves to God and to their fellow humans either as subordinates, or, in the case of superiors, in service to their subordinates. Within this social order, only a small minority of men could expect to have control, while the lower classes, young, single men and particularly women were largely subject to the will of others. Cats' advice suggests that those subject to the will of others should accept it and do their best within those social parameters.

Cats' belief that women like Jokaste and the women of Shiloh should accept Menander and the Benjamites, respectively, as their husbands is also based on his understanding of the marital relationship as influenced by Pietist authors. The act of rape or abduction did not allow women any expression of righteous anger. Raped women were expected to be obedient and demure. Finding themselves wives of the Benjamites, the women of Shiloh were expected to demonstrate obedience by subjecting themselves to their husbands' guidance.[66] As husbands, Pietist advice demanded that the Benjamites make their authority over their wives palatable, not only by providing for them and protecting them, but also by being friendly, loving, tolerant, moral, and respectful of their wives' authority in the home.[67] As Cats idealized and contemporized these biblical characters, he portrayed the Benjamites as kind-hearted husbands who offer the women of Shiloh companionship, material wealth, status, and children. In naming the women queens of all the husbands' possessions, Cats allowed the Benjamites to take a cue from Gouge, who, as we have seen, expected a husband to delegate some of his power to his new wife to make her submission acceptable.[68]

The examples of Shechem and the Benjamites demonstrate that rape can be construed as an expression of male love. For example, just after Shechem rapes Dinah, he "held her by the hand, and in order to win her favor by such pleasant coaxing he earnestly offered her nice promises of love, comforted her, spoke to her, . . . [and] offered her a dish of fruit and sweets."[69] Shechem expected to entice Dinah to marry him in spite of his

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[65] Peters, 314–315. Cited by Spierling "Honor and Subjection," 486.

[66] Bullinger, 54 verso; Taffin, 129; Udemans, 335; Hommius, 367; Gouge, 27, 31, 34, 77.

[67] Taffin, 187, 190, 200; Perkins, 123; Udemans, 334–336; Hommius, 367, 416; Teelinck, *Noodwendig Vertoog*, 201.

[68] Gouge, dedication.

[69] "Maar Sichem even-wel die houtse byder-hant, En biet haar even-staag een aardig minne-pant, Vertroost haar, spreekt haar aan, en wilse vorder leyden, En liet oock even

violence. This is also true in Cats' version of the abduction of the women of Shiloh. The men from Benjamin, who abducted young women, respond to their cries and complaints with kind words and kisses:

> When one hears a maiden crying for her mother, one hears our Benjamites reply: girlfriend, calm yourself; I am your dear husband, I am better for you than any other can be. Or if her bitter sorrow cannot be extinguished by words, then he stops her mouth with a thousand sweet kisses. The young man hushes her scream with such a steady kiss that her cries present no obstacle.[70]

Cats believed that love had motivated Shechem's and the Benjamites' actions and that their love could persuade the women to consent. The Benjamites' affection for the women of Shiloh can also be seen in the image of the abduction below (see plate 12). The Benjamites embrace the women of Shiloh as if they were lovers. The woman in the center already appears to have accepted her abductor, while the men on the right and left seem to patiently hold the women while they protest, seemingly certain that these women will soon be receptive to their amorous advances.[71]

Due to the description of Shechem's love and marriage proposal, several contemporary biblical scholars have posited that this story is not about rape, but rather it is about a failure to attain prior consent from Dinah's parents or a refusal to allow an outsider to join the group.[72] However, Susanne Scholz argues that these modern scholars interpret this story of rape in other ways because it does not follow the pattern we expect for

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daar een fruyt-gerecht bereyden, Hy biet haar suycker-werck en dingen na de kunst, Om soo door soet gevley te winnen hare gunst." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 225.

70 "Indien men hoort een maegt om hare moeder krijten, Men hoort in tegen-roep van onse Benjamijiten: Vriendinne, weest gerust; ick ben uw lieve man, Die sal u beter zijn als iemant wesen kan. Of is haer wrange spijt met woorden niet te blussen, Soo wort haer mont gestopt met duysent soete kussen. De vryer breekt den schreeu met soo een stagen soen, Dat sy door haer gekrijt geen hinder weet te doen." Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamyten te Scilo," *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 103, lines 275–292.

71 Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamiten te Scilo," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 34. Cats also suggests that women can and even often do enjoy rape through his dialogue of Jokaste and Tryphose in which the former accuses the latter of not despising the rape for its own sake, but because the rapist subsequently abandoned her for another woman. See Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 54, lines 421–428.

72 Lyn M. Bechtel, "What if Dinah is not Raped? (Genesis 34)," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 62 (1994): 31. Quoted in Susanne Scholz, *Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 33. See also Tikva Frymer-Kenshy, "Virginity in the Bible," in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Victor H. Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson, and Tikva Frymer-Kenshky, Journal for the Study of Old Testament Supplement Series 262 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 89.

Plate 12. The Benjamite Abduction of the Women of Shiloh, from Cats, *Complete Works*, II, 34.

rape. It is not clear that Dinah was physically injured, Shechem was not a dangerous stranger, and Dinah did not share her distress with others. None of the seventeenth-century authors examined in this study question whether this Dinah was raped.[73] In their understanding of aggressive male sexuality, rape is compatible with a man's desire to marry a woman and:

> . . . her will to marry him. The conjunction of force and marriage promise . . . is consonant with the culture of service and the prerogatives that masters assumed, and it reflects a particular culture of marriage, in which economic necessity and social compulsion played a large part in decision-making. But it is also part of wider discourses of desire, in which men's lust

[73] In this sense, seventeenth century authors were more sensitive to the possibility of acquaintance rape than twenty-first century men and women who wrongly believe that most rapists are "crazy, wild maniacs who attack women on the streets in the middle of the night." Scholz, 29. Scholz cites sociologist James D. Brewer's *The Danger from Strangers: Confronting the Threat of Assault*, in which he claims that seventy-six percent of victim-survivors know their attackers.

> or love was readily expressed through force and women's sexual roles were negotiated in response to this.[74]

Rape in this sense is not antithetical to love and marriage, but is seen as an expression of male love. In Cats' stories of rape, men's lust and love are expressed through force and are not easily differentiated from courting a woman in more proper ways.

Cats provided many reasons why a raped woman should want to forgive and marry her rapist, but he never depicted rape as a dreadful and violent crime. In fact, he does not mention a single detail of forced sex. This omission may have resulted in part from prudishness, but the result is that Cats obscured the impact of rape on women. At the moment of rape in his narratives, women become flowers, food, and defenseless animals. For example, in the story of the double rapist, Menander takes Tryphose's "maiden bloom as loot" and plucks Jokaste's "little flower."[75] In another instance, Cats descriptions transform the women of Shiloh into various types of food and drink available for the Benjaminites' consumption:

> There one [Benjamite] requires an old wine, another a new young wine,
> One that bites the tongue, still another a sweet meal.
> One wants warm pastry, and another demands roasted,
> According to where his mouth or thoughts lead.
> And never is there something so uniquely made.
> There are in every thing, especially in loving,
> There are in every thing varying, changing preferences.[76]

Imagining the Benjamites at a feast is far more pleasant than envisioning this group of men attacking a village of women. In this way, Cats encouraged his audience to ignore the physical and sexual violence in order to more easily excuse the rapists. He transformed women into objects at the moment of their violation to mask the pain and anguish they experience as victims of rape. In this light, women should forgive their rapists because rape is not really so bad.

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[74] Gowing, 100.

[75] "Haer maeghdelicke blom ten roove wechgedragen." Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 44, line 46. "…haer blomtjen heb gepluckt…" Cats, 47, line 152.

[76] "Daar eyscht d'een ouden wijn, een ander nieuwen most, Een dat de tonge bijt, een ander soete kost. Een wilder heet geback, een ander eyscht gebraden, Na dat de mont hem leyt of na hem dunckt geraden. En noyt en is'er iet soo selsaam toe-gemaackt. Daar zijn in alle ding, bysonder in het minnen, Daar zijn in alle ding verscheyde tuymel-sinnen." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 100, lines 131–138.

Cats also asked men to marry women they raped in order to restore the women's honor. Unlike Menander, who did not lose his "luster" despite his "mischievous deed," female virtue or honor was based on chastity or virginity.[77] In fact, it is their lost honor, and not specifically the violence they suffered, that Jokaste and Tryphose lament again and again. Jokaste's honor is restored by her marriage to Menander. He changes her from "the one who had been violated" into an "*echte vrou*," meaning housewife—an honorable position and legal status.[78] Tryphose, "who had previously been violated", is also "raised" by her marriage to one of the judges of the case.[79]

In his story of the biblical rape of Dinah, Cats also showed that, had she been able to marry her rapist, Shechem, son of the local ruler, her honor would have been restored. Her father curses and punishes her brothers for preventing their marriage.

> How is it, saith Israel [Jacob], your sister is disgraced, and we . . . but a small people and in a strange place, will be so hated as the pest because of your wicked behavior. This is a very strange event! My daughter is violated, and we will never find a man to honor her, Ah! Shechem has been murdered by your unwise deeds . . .[80]

According to this story, by killing him Dinah's brothers did a greater disservice to her than Shechem did. They took away the possibility that he would marry her and restore her honor. As plate 13 shows, Shechem, as the son of a king, was a worthy match; he is luxuriously dressed, walking in stride with Dinah, and touching her arm affectionately. Shechem's wealth and status qualified him for forgiveness and for subsequent marriage. Cats cast Dinah's brothers as the villains for preventing this outcome.[81]

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[77] "Ick ben hier in het lant een edelman geboren, En van mijn ouders glans en heb ick niet verloren . . . Dat ick een ridder ben, en dat mijn stoute daet/ Niet aen en heeft geroert een maeght van hooger staet. Wy sijn in een gewest te samen opgetogen, En van gelijcken stam, en even van vermogen." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 46, Lines 119–124.

[78] ". . . die geschonden was die wert een echte vrou." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 58, line 612.

[79] "De juffer wert verhooght, die eertijts was geschonden." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 59, lines 638–642.

[80] "Hoe dus, seyt Israël, uw Suster is te schande, En wy, door uw bedrijf, als grouwels in den lande, Wy, maar een weynig volcx, en in een vreemt gewest/ Zijn, door uw stout bedrijf, soo hatig als de pest. Is 't niet een seldsaam werk! Mijn dogter is geschonden, En die haar eeren sou en wort niet meer gevonden, Ach! Sichem is vermoort door uw onwijse daat . . ." Cats, "Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 226.

[81] According to Adrienne Zuideweg, Cats also expresses this viewpoint to criticize the Dutch East India Company governor general Jan Pieterz Coen for allowing the judicial

Plate 13. Dinah and Shechem from Cats, *Marriage, Part I: Maiden*, in *Complete Works*, I, 252.

According to Cats, eligible men of good standing should also be willing to marry a woman raped by another man. In offering this advice Cats was rather progressive in so far as he tried to undermine the double-standard that required female sexual purity. Luther, for instance, disagreed that men would be willing to marry "a despoiled woman" so much so that he advised couples who had secretly copulated to remain together even against the will of their parents in order to spare the woman a life of

execution of Pieter Jacobsz Cortenhoeff for having extramarital sexual contact with his adopted daughter Sara Specx. In his "Aenmerckingen over Ontstelde Dochters," Cats emphasizes the young couple's intention to marry and the opportunity Coen had to offer mercy. However, Cats does state: "although all Fathers are not that hard, it is still best for all young people to avoid that danger and to do that which is honest . . . and to never attempt to attain a good situation through the exercise of evil means." ". . . schoon alle Vaders niet even hart en zijn, 't is even-wel best voor alle jonge lieden dat gevaar to schuwen, en te doen dat eevar is . . . en noyt door quade middelen tot een goede sake te willen komen." Cats, "Aenmerckingen over Ontstelde Dochters," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 124–5. Zuiderweg, "Sara en Pieter, een Bataviase liefdesaffaire," *Indische letteren: documentatieblad van de Werkgroep Indisch-Nederlandse Letterkunde* 22 (2007): 2–15.

scandal.[82] Yet several examples of men marrying a woman raped by another man appear in Cats' works. For example, Tryphose marries a "knight who served on the court council." On her wedding day, she was adorned "with greenery and virginal palm, and crowned with flowers" and the room was decorated with "fresh garlands of roses," symbolic plants usually reserved for virgin brides.[83] Tryphose's social standing and virtuous behavior prior to her rape seems to signal that she did not consent. Cats explains:

> It is my opinion, following the wise, that the body is not understood to be violated if the spirit and the will remain entirely inviolate; and that virginity is much more a virtue of the spirit than it is of the body. A woman, although abducted in body by a villain, can be said to have remained honorable, even to have maintained her virginity, and therefore it cannot be dishonorable to take such a woman to wife, especially if she may be gifted with exceptional virtue.[84]

Cats' advice both repeats Saint Augustine's belief that raped women can remain pure and echoes Calvin's concern that these women not be left stigmatized, single, and poor.[85] Although unspoken, the kind of woman Cats had in mind was well-to-do. For a woman to be desirable as a wife in Cats' estimation, she would not work outside the home. It is improbable that he would extend this kind of generosity to maidservants, who were frequently depicted as sexually voracious in contemporary art and literature.[86] Based on his own sexual experiences with maidservants, Cats cast these women as apt to seduce and engage in immorality.[87] Moreover,

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[82] "That Parents Should Neither Compel Nor Hinder the Marriage of Their Children, and That Children Should Not Become Engaged Without the Consent of Their Parents" in Luther's Works, ed. J. Pelikan and H. Lehman 45, p. 384. Quoted by Ozment, 34.

[83] "Een ridder in den Raet aenhoorde dese saken . . . Met kruyt en maeghdepalm, met bloemen kroonen magh. Dat sy de gansche zaal, ge-eygent om te danssen Mag cieren overal met versche rosekranssen." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 58–9.

[84] "En daer op meyne ick, na de-mael dat het lichaem by de wijse niet en wert verstaen geschonden te zijn, als de geest en de wille, daer uyt rijsende, ongeschent in haer geheel zijn gebleven; en dat de maegdom veel eer is een deugt des geefts, als des lichaems. Dat een Vrouwe, schoon ontschaeckt aen haer lichaem by een booswicht, even wel geseyt kan werden eerlick te zijn gebleven, ja haren maegdom te hebben behouden, en daerom niet oneerlick te zijn soodanigen Vrou-mensch tot een Vrouw aen te nemen, sonderlinge ingevalle de selve met eenige uytmuntende deugden is begaeft." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 88.

[85] According to Augustine, ". . . while the sanctity of the soul remains even when the body is violated, the sanctity of the body is not lost." Augustine, Marcus Dods, and Thomas Merton, *The City of God* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), Book 1, 27. Witte and Kingdon, 121–2.

[86] Schama, 455, Franits, *Paragons of Virtue*, 100–110.

[87] Ten Berge, 19; Boekema-Sciarone, 29–30.

a maidservant who charged her master or her master's son with rape was not often believed and was not eligible to marry the man she accused.[88]

Cats also provided a biblical example of the esteemed King David to demonstrate that men should marry a woman who had been forced to have sex with another man. In this case, Saul forced his daughter Michal, who was married to King David, to take another husband. In spite of this, David later took her back as his wife "because what happened was forced and not done out of free will."[89] Cats' idea that forced sex does not stand in the way of the reunion or creation of well-to-do couples demonstrates a compassionate attempt to improve some women's lives after rape.

In addition, Cats declared that not only is the woman redeemable after rape, but her offspring is as well. He advised the reader that, despite much belief to the contrary, "a raped woman can become pregnant by the man who does violence to her. And beyond this, that this child shall be considered a legal child, due to the mother, and not a bastard . . ."[90] In this statement, Cats contradicted the widely circulated Galenic theory that pregnancy could not result from rape because conception required both man and woman to achieve orgasm, and that women's enjoyment signaled that the act was adultery not rape.[91] His disagreement with this prevalent view allowed Cats to again argue against the marginalization of innocent women and children.

Cats' motivation for wanting to provide raped women with husbands and their offspring with legal fathers was in part his goal that these social policies would benefit the Dutch state. Cats admitted that: "the well-being of the State is the highest Law" and although some of his advice concerning rape and abduction may seem "rough and contrary to reason," it aims to "improve the overall situation through the service of the common good."[92] This advice repeats Cicero's belief that the decision whether to prosecute rape should be based upon the welfare of the Roman Republic and the

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[88] Bennett and Froide, 8–9.

[89] ". . . wat 'er geschiet was uyt bedwang, en niet uyt vryen wille was gedaen." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 88.

[90] "De Geleerde houden, dat ja een verkracht vrou-mensch kan bevrucht werden door den genen die haer gewelt doet. En boven dien noch dit, dat soodanigen kint na Rechten voor een wettig kint wert gehouden, ten aensien van de moeder, en niet voor een bastaert . . . ." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 88.

[91] Corinne J. Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 29.

[92] ". . . de welstant van den Staet de hoogste Wet is, en dat dusdanige groote gevallen veeltijds soo wat rouwigheyt en onbillickheden in sich hebben; doch verbeteren het al met den dienst van 't Gemeenebeste." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 37.

common good.[93] For Cats, the implication is that the judicial execution of a potential patriarch charged with rape would be detrimental to the welfare of the Dutch Republic.

We can see this logic in Cats' story of the Benjamites. Cats excused the Benjamites on the grounds that they had acted in the best interest of their community. Sophronicus explains:

> . . . the Benjamites did not acquire the virgins of Shiloh to displease, shame, or act violently toward these women or their parents; but importantly, the Benjamites (being empowered by a higher hand) took the Daughters of Shiloh to themselves for their benefit and to fulfill their inability due to the oath which was taken in the time of the elders [of Israel], which forbid them from giving their daughters to the Benjamites as wives, although the Benjamites had wanted to do such: In addition to this they [the fathers of the women of Shiloh] were probably happy that the situation happened according to their will without themselves having to break their oath.[94]

In Cats' assessment, the fleeting anger of the women and their parents was inconsequential. What was important was the larger picture that God had ordained these abductions for the good of the tribes of Israel. The abductions rectified the shortage of men in Shiloh, the shortage of women in Benjamin, and returned the once-renegade Benjamites back into the favor of the elders of Israel. In this story, Cats contends that after the initial shock the abductions proved to be in the best interests of the women of Shiloh, their parents, and their tribes.

In his story "Two Raped and Both Married," Cats also emphasized that women should marry wealthy rapists in the interest of the larger community. Tryphose, who does not want to sacrifice herself for her fellow citizens, addresses Jokaste: "My judgment foolish virgin, causes you a great sorrow. Then how it comes about for you does not concern me."[95] Tryphose neither cares what happens to Jokaste, nor about the other

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[93] Cicero, *pro Milone*, 13–14. Cited by Moses, "Livy's Lucretia," 67.

[94] ". . . de Benjamijten de maeghden van Scilo sich niet hebbe toe-ge-eygent, om deselve, ofte haer ouders, onlust, gewelt, of schande aen te doen; maer hier is te letten, dat deselve (van hooger hand des gemachtight sijnde) de Dochters van Scilo tot hen hebben genomen, Om te bate te komen, en als te vervullen de onmacht doen ter tijt in de ouders wesende, die om des gedaenen Eeds wille . . . haer dochters niet en vermochten de Benjamijten tot vrouwen uyt te geven, schoon deselve hadden gewilt sulcks te mogen doen: in voegen datse vermoedelick blijde sijn geweest, dat de saecken na haren wensch quam uyt te vallen, sonder sich van meyneedigheyt schuldigh te maken . . ." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 37.

[95] "Mijns oordeels, dwase maeght, u naeckt een groot verdriet. Dan hoe het u vergaet, dat stuck en raeckt my niet." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 52, lines 331–332.

citizens of her country. She is only concerned with her fatherland and other women in a very legalistic way:

> And although [Menander] is caught and stands before the judge, he [may] receive a reward for his cursed deed? That is, in my mind, setting the doors open so that all the lusty youth sharpen their desire. This will encourage theft throughout the entire city and all the fatherland, and will set it all on fire. If you let this villain and bands of those just like him free, they will violate all your daughters, all your young women . . . No rulers, be harsh, and let this villain suffer, so that all who witness it will shun his evil path.[96]

Tryphose's argument that this rapist's punishment should serve as an example to dissuade others, is a convincing one. However, Jokaste's argument is also persuasive. She tells the court:

> I want to profit my father's house and this city, and to honor my fallen name through bonds of marriage . . . Ah! If the council will believe . . . [Tryphose's] story, our city will be robbed of many houses. You will deprive all three at once any remedy. You will make it necessary to throw all three at once out of the city . . .[97]

Jokaste argues that while her marriage to her rapist would promote the well-being of the state by maintaining the wealth of families, Tryphose's plea that he should be killed would rob the families and state of wealth and stability. Jokaste continues:

> I want the marriage bed, that richly exists; And you [Tryphose] the bloody sword that annihilates lands . . . I pray you here O wise council, will do what is best for the city and most beneficial for the state.[98]

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[96] "En schoon hy wort betrapt, en voor den rechter staet, Dan even loon ontfanght voor syn vervloeckte daet? Dat is, na mijn begrijp, de poorten open setten/ Om al de geyle jeught in hare lust te wetten, Dat is de gansche stadt en al het vaderlant/ Te stellen tot een roof, en al in vollen brant. Wel laet vry desen bouf, en syns gelijcke benden/ U dochters altemael, u jonge vrouwen schenden . . . Neen, vorsten weest gestrengh, en laet den bouve lijden, Soo magh al wie het siet syn quade gangen mijden." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 53, lines 371–378, 381–382.

[97] "Ick wil mijns vaders huys en dese stadt vermeeren, En mijn vervallen naem door echte banden eeren . . . Ach! Soo men in den Raet haer voorstel wil gelooven, Men sal dan onse stadt van menigh huys berooven, Men salder drie in een gaen stellen buyten raet, Men salder drie gelijck gaen stellen buyten staet." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 55, lines 461–472.

[98] "Ick wil het echte bedt, dat rijcken doet bestaen; En ghy het bloedigh sweert, dat landen doet vergaen . . . Ghy, wat ick bidden magh, doet hier o wijsen Raet, Het beste voor de stadt, en't nutste voor den staet." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 58, lines 583–584, 587–588.

Again following Cats' axiom that the good of the state is the primary goal, the court decides to allow Jokaste and Menander to marry and thus repair and ally two powerful families.

Cats juxtaposed Tryphose's unwomanly desire for retribution with Jokaste's more appropriate peacemaking in order to demonstrate that even after rape, women should not think of their own desires but rather of what is best for others. In offering advice to raped women, Jokaste states:

> I think it is better to imitate the daughters of the Sabines in their whole conduct, than to want to act just as the courageous wife [Lucretia] did, who killed herself only out of sorrow. But this woman was married when she was violated, and maybe thus could find no better advice.[99]

Jokaste serves as the model rape victim in Cats' story. Her example instructs raped women to sacrifice themselves for the Dutch Republic. They should submit to their rapists to become mothers of the new state like the Sabine women. Cats considered raped women, refashioned as wives, the proper sacrifices for the new Republic. By accepting their fate, such women could help preserve the fortunes of wealthy families and further Cats' goal of maintaining the social order.

Obedient Minors

Cats also endeavored to expand the power of wealthy members of Dutch society over their children. Wealthy parents, eager to marry their children to a member of another influential family that controlled access to important public offices, did what they could to influence their children's choice of spouse.[100] Privately, they did a number of things to limit contact between their children and candidates they deemed inappropriate for marriage. They could forbid contact, and if a relationship continued that they did not approve of, they could threaten disinheritance. The Political Ordinance of 1580 granted parents additional leverage in directing their children's marriages. It allowed parents to charge a minor child who

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[99] " 'T is beter, na my dunckt, de dochters der Sabijnen/ In dit geheel beleyt gelijck te mogen schijnen, Als hier te willen doen gelijck het moedigh wijf, Dat sigh uyt enckel spijt gingh brengen om het lijf. Maer dese was getrout wanneer sy was geschonden, En heeft daerom misschien geen beter raet gevonden." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 57, lines 553–558.

[100] See also Adams, 508–509, and Israel, 125.

married without parental consent with abduction—a capital offence.[101] Although parents rarely exercised this prerogative, its existence signals the preference the law granted to parents in preventing marriages they did not sanction.[102] Following this trend and the arguments of several Pietist authors, Cats also employed stories of rape to argue for parents' power in determining who their children would marry and for stringent punishment of those who challenged their parents' authority in this matter.

Although the authors of the Pietist domestic conduct books more often than not favored parental approval, the issue of whose consent was most valued—the prospective spouse's or their parents'—was contested. This debate extends back to Calvin, whose own policy had fluctuated from initially allowing parents to annul the clandestine marriage of a child to deciding that this allowed parents to act as tyrants over their children, made young women vulnerable to spinsterhood, and made any potential offspring illegitimate.[103] In at least two instances, Calvin strongly supported the necessity of young people's consent. In his 1563 commentary on Joshua 15:14, for example, Calvin explained that Caleb's capricious offer of his daughter, Ascha, to any man who killed the enemy army's leader, was unjust: "Although it is the office of parents to settle their daughters in life, they are not permitted to exercise tyrannical power over them or to assign them to whatever husbands they think fit without consulting them."[104] Elsewhere Calvin made the consent of the spouses the cornerstone of marriage: "[I]f the husband and wife are not in mutual agreement and do not love each other, this is a profanation of marriage, and not a marriage at all, properly speaking. For the [mutual] will is the principal bond."[105]

Only one Pietist author regarded the consent of the young people as most important. Similar to Calvin, Lodewyck van Renesse's definition of marriage was based on the consent of the husband and wife. Of those

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[101] Haks, 114–119. For more on the expansion of parental power see chapter 1 of this book, pp. 15–17.

[102] In spite of evidence that wealthy parents exerted control over the marriages of their children, Haks concludes that youth enjoyed great freedom in choosing their spouses during the seventeenth century. Part of this claim is based on his finding that of the few cases that appeared before the Hof van Holland, the majority were decided in favor of the young couple. However, this claim ignores both the inability of young women to choose, the restriction of young men's choices to women of similar status and religious beliefs, and the tremendous influence parents exercised over children outside of courts. See Haks, chapter 4, 105–140.

[103] Witte and Kingdon, 170.

[104] Cited by Witte and Kingdon, 185.

[105] Witte and Kingdon, 121.

considered here, he is the only Pietist author to entirely omit the requirement of parental consent.[106] Hommius, Taffin, Gouge, and Teelinck stated that both the consent of parents and spouses is needed, without placing clear emphasis on one or the other.[107] Conversely, Perkins, de Swaef, and Udemans emphasized the importance of parental consent. Indeed, Perkins required parental consent even past the age of majority, and explained that children do not have power over themselves, but should submit to being governed by their parents. In addition, he suggested that children do not necessarily have to assent at the time of their betrothal, but that consent can come in time—an idea that Cats repeats, as we will see.[108] Refuting Calvin's later stance, De Swaef contended that the consent of a young man and young woman is not enough; even after intercourse, parents have the right to separate the couple.[109] Udemans made an even stronger statement in favor of the parents' right to decide whom their children should marry. By omitting the requirement of children's consent and instead directing children to heed parental counsel and consent in all important decisions, he reminded children that their duty as inferiors is obedience.[110] Much like the requirement that a husband's domination of his wife should be tempered by a devoted love for her, these authors insisted that parents had to dominate their children with a benevolent spirit. Parents were not to misuse their authority or become tyrannical, but should strictly punish children out of love.[111]

Cats more closely followed the ideas of Perkins, de Swaef, and Udemans as he strongly favored the expansion of parents' power over their children's marriages. He provided two biblical examples in which young men were forced by elders to marry. In application of Exodus 22:16 and in agreement with Calvin's commentary on this passage, Cats justified forcing a young man into marriage:

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[106] Van Renesse, 9. This work, published two years after *Touchstone of the Wedding Band*, seems to have been written to refute Cats' emphasis on parental power because it follows Cats' format of discussing marriage through particular biblical stories and is the only other domestic conduct book to do so.

[107] Taffin, 212–3; Hommius, 2–3, 414; Gouge, 112, 114; Teelinck, *Den Christelücken Leytsman*, 97.

[108] Perkins, 76, 85, 87, and 69.

[109] De Swaef, 110.

[110] Udemans, 237. In addition, Udemans employed the biblical example of Ascha, whose father offers her to Atniel without her consent as a positive example of the power of parents, again in contradiction to Calvin's use of this story. Udemans, 237; Witte and Kingdon, 170.

[111] Udemans, 243, 332; De Swaef, 109. Teelinck, 199; Hommius, 370.

> [When] a father and other friends, [found] . . . a young man on the bed having satisfied his lusts with the daughter of the house, [the father] . . . made the young man promise to legally marry her by threatening him; and they even forced a written promise from him.[112]

Cats stated that the young man must honor his promise despite the common belief that marriage must occur voluntarily. This argument parallels Calvin's annotation of this passage. Legal scholar John Witte Jr. and historian Robert M. Kingdon explain Calvin's motivation:

> After all, the rapist had exercised his free will in choosing to rape the woman. Properly, he should be executed for his offense. But that would only compound the harm to the young woman who could now be left ravaged, stigmatized, and without ongoing support if her father dismissed her. So, the rapist had to marry his victim, to pay the full marriage price, and to live peaceably with his wife thereafter—and consider himself lucky to have escaped with his life.[113]

Cats agreed with Calvin that parents could force a man to marry a woman he raped in order to improve her fate.

Cats' version of the story of Jacob and Leah from Genesis 29 also features a young man forced to marry a woman with whom he has had sexual intercourse. In his version, Cats recounted how Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his first daughter Leah instead of his second daughter Rachel:

> People led . . . [Rachel] through many rooms, no eye is able to follow and keep up with her, and see! In this confusion, and in the enormous tour. The right Bride is pried from the crowd, taken from among the people, and

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[112] "Een vader en andere vrienden, hebbende onlangs een Jongeling op het bedde betrapt, daer by met de dochter van den huyse sijn lust hadde gepleegt, hebben den selven met dreygementen daer toe gebracht, dat hy . . . de selve heft belooft wettelick te sullen trouwen; en hebben den selven oock een schriftelick bescheyt afgeperst. De vrage is, nademael by een yder vast wert gesteldt, dat alle howelicken uyt bewilginge moete geschieden, en auders niet, of de selve jongeling gehouden is sijn trouwe, in-voegen als voren hem af-gedwongen, te voltrecken, dan of hy vryheydt heeft sich elders te mogen verbinden?" Soph: ". . . soodanigen jongeling, ten zy de dochter, daer hy mede te doen heeft, anders van oneerlickheydt beschuldigt kan werden, verbonden is sijn belofte na te komen, en meyne boven andere redenen daer toe te dienen de bolgende Schriftuer-plaetsen, *Exod. XXII:16. Wanneer iemant een maegt bekout, die noch niet getrout en is, en beslaeptse, die sal haer geven haer bruydt-schap, en haer ten wijve nemen. Deut. XXII.28,29. Wanneer iemant aen een maegt komt die niet belooft en is, en grijptse en slaept by haer, en het wordt alsoo bevonden: Soo sal die, diese beslapen heeft, haren vader vijftig sickel silvers geven, en salse ten wijve hevven, daerom dat hyse geschendet heeft. Hy en kanse niet verlaten sijn leef-dage* . . . . Mitsgaders op dat de weelige jonge lieden haer leeren onthouden, en tot eerlicke houwelicken, niet tot vuyle dertelheden, sich leeren begeven." Cats, "t Samensprake, roerende d'ontschakinge," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 90.

[113] Witte and Kingdon, 121–2.

> with brisk steps Leah was brought there, and forced into the game . . . The wily fox [Laban] carried this out so craftily, that no one in the group noticed the switch. And see! In this confusion, aided by the night, Rachel was led away and Leah brought there. Her face is covered . . . The bride is put to bed, the candles taken away; people call the bridegroom and let him come in. He [Jacob] proceeds with no shred of suspicion, approaches the maiden, as if to his own wife: the joy, the wine, the night, all work in collaboration, and prevent him from noticing any of the ruse. So long as it is dark he knows no better, so that he with a deed enjoys his own bride; But as the golden sun rises, he raises up his eyes, and opens the curtains of the bed; but he does not win the one he thought was there . . . [F]inally through the gray air it all becomes clear, and alas Jacob found his cousin Leah there.[114]

While Jacob is not raped, nor does he rape Leah; he is tricked into having sex with her. He angrily accosts Laban:

> Uncle, you have taught me well to break my marital promise? You have made me a villain, even on the first night? . . . I was beholden to Rachel, my beloved, To whom I alone find myself bounded to with faithfulness, that you have this night turned from her through a ruse, and she who took her place is thereby violated. Your daughter is a whore, and I am now a villain.[115]

Jacob refers to himself as a villain and to Leah as a whore because he believes that Laban forced the two of them into an illicit sexual relationship. Laban shifts the argument by claiming that Jacob was not forced at all; in fact, he consented when he enjoyed the night with Leah:

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[114] "Men leyde vast de maeght door veelderhande salen, Geen oogh van die haer volght en kan haer achter-halen, En, siet! In dit gewoel, en in het woest geloop, Soo wert de rechte Bruyt ontsutselt uyt den hoop, Getogen uyt het volck, en met geswinde sprongen/ Wert Lea daer gebracht, en in het spel gedrongen . . . Dit wist de loose vos soo listigh uyt te wercken, Dat niemant van de hoop de greep en konde mercken. En, siet! In dit geraes, door gunste van den nacht, Wort Rachel wegh geleyt, en Lea daer gebracht. Haer aensien is bedeckt, . . . De Bruyt die wert gebet, de kaersen wegh genomen; Men roept den Bruydegom, en laet hem binnen komen. Hy, die hier niet en gaet als met de beste trou, Begeeft hem tot de maeght, als tot sijn eygen vrou: De vreught, de wijn, de nacht, die hier te samen wercken, Sijn oorsaeck dat de Man geen list en kan bemercken; Soo langh het duyster is, en weet hy anders niet, Als dat hy met ér daet sijn eygen Bruyt geniet; Maer als de gulde son is hooger op geresen . . . Hy slaet sijn oogen op, hy schuyft de bed-gordijn; Maer hy en wint haer niet, die hij daer meynt te sijn . . . Maer siet, de grauwe lucht die wort ten lesten klaer, En Jacob vont, eylaes! Sijn Nichte Lea daer." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 17.

[115] "Wel Oom, leert ghy my self mijn echten trouwe breken? Maeckt ghy my tot een boef, oock op den eersten nacht? . . . ick schuldigh was aen Rachel, mijn beminde, Aen wie ick my alleen met trou verbonden vinde, Dat hebt ghy desen nacht met list van haer gewent, En die haer deel geniet die is ér door geschent. Uw dochter is een hoer, en ick een boef gewerden . . ." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 18.

> But you have lain all night in her lap, And she in your arms, and no one has complained; . . . when you did not send her back at once, you proved that you enjoyed the business; . . . You have enjoyed of her sweet youth, and her tender bloom, And that oh lusty young man! And that did not bring you sorrow.[116]

According to Mosaic law, the fact that Jacob had deprived Leah of her virginity meant that Laban would have been able to force him to honor his marriage to the wrong woman.

The moral lesson of Cats' story, "Marriage of Three," is that regardless of an elder's impropriety, one must still be obedient. Cats composed a long list of sins that Laban committed: he should have mentioned the customs of the land when Jacob asked to marry Rachel, he did not keep his word when he promised Jacob he could marry Rachel, he was wrong to keep Jacob in his service under false pretenses, to put Leah in danger of violation and abandonment, and to make Jacob work for a dowry that the former should have given with his daughter. And yet, in spite of all this, Jacob still had to be obedient to Laban because "he was alone in Mesopotamia and under the power of his Uncle."[117]

While parents (and other guardians) exercised power over the marital prospects of their sons, as Cats demonstrated through these examples, he argued that parental power over young daughters was even more extensive. To back this claim, he cited a variety of sources, including the following work by the Roman poet Catullus, who wrote from the perspective of a man wooing a reluctant young woman:

> Your Father has given me full power,
> Your mother has given me permission
> To take you to bed
> This pleases the both of them,
> And you are under their command.
> Your virginity is not entirely your own;
> To your father is a third,
> Your mother has the same rights,
> Thus is your case very weak.

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116 "Maer ghy hebt al de nacht in haren schoot gelegen, En sy in uwen arm, en niemant heeft geklaeght; Een teycken dat het werck u niet en heeft mishaeght. Want mits ghy haer terstont niet weder hebt gesonden/ Soo hebt ghy voor gewis den handel goet gevonden; De daet die heeft betoont dat sy u wel beviel, En dat sy wederom u waert en lieftal hiel. Ghy hebt haer soete jeught, haer teere bloem genoten, En dat ó dertel quant! En heeft u niet verdroten." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 19.

117 ". . . hy, in Mesopotamia alleen wesende onder de macht van sijnen Oom." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 22.

> Because of that, tender and sweet jewel
> Only one-third is your own.
> Strive not then, o . . . child,
> Now that you find yourself mastered,
> But give up your bloom as it serves,
> But give it to a dear friend.[118]

In addition to this ancient precedent in which the father and the mother collectively have more right to offer their daughter in marriage than does she, Cats cited the biblical story of Ascha and Atniel. Cats' understanding of the story conflicts with Calvin's, who claimed that it was wrong for Ascha's father to offer her in marriage without her consent. Cats, conversely, contended that Ascha's father's actions were justified because it was a marriage of state instituted for the common good. He concluded that in the Old Testament parents or guardians had complete power to direct the marriages of both their sons and daughters (as the example of Jacob and Leah demonstrated) and in the New Testament parents continued to have this power specifically over daughters.[119] Although Cats did not explicitly state it, his line of reasoning here suggests he believed that parents of his own time continued to have extensive powers over their daughters' marriages in particular.

Cats also provided evidence of contemporary punishments meted out to young men and women who did not consult their parents. In one instance, although a bride and groom both consented to a marriage, the groom's parents "were completely unpleased" by what had occurred and they "separated the young people."[120] Cats also explained that according to law, if a young man takes away a young woman with her consent, but without that of her parents, "the abductor will in no way be spared from the punishment of death." His reasoning was that the parents have "the

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[118] "Uw Vader geeft my vollen macht, Uw moeder heeft my toegestaen/ Met u te bed te mogen gaen Het stuck bevalt hun beyde wel, En ghy staet onder haer bevel. Uw Maeghdom hoort u niet geheel; Uw Vader komt een derde-deel, Uw Moeder heeft gelijcke recht, Dus staen uw saken wonder slecht. Want van dat teer en soet juweel/ En komt u maer een derde-deel. En streeft dan niet, o sietste kint, Nu ghy u dus vermeestert vint, Maer geeft uw bloemtjen als het dient, Maer geeft 'et aen een lieven vrient . . ." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht ofte Ampt der Ionck-vrovwen, in Eerbaer Liefde, Aen-ghewesen door Sinne-beelden* Middelburg, Ghedruckt by Hans van der Hellen, 1618), 29–30.

[119] Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 31.

[120] "Doch de ouders van den voorschreven Graef, van 't gene dat'er tot Oxfort gebeurt was verwittigt, en des gansch t'onvreden wesende, hebben beiden de . . . jonge lieden . . . gescheyden." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 90.

say over her and her body, and her will."[121] Cats provided the example of the daughter of a prominent person who claimed to have been abducted, but who in fact had:

> . . . herself rented the wagon, and her chambermaid . . . had herself sought the young man (who was said to have abducted her) to travel with her as it later took place. . . . [T]he father of the aforementioned young woman continued the case determined that justice and punishment should be exercised. He brought the case so far, that in the court, he nearly had the young man transformed from vibrant life to death, and such certainly would have been brought about had friends not intervened and softened the anger of the father, [and] convinced him to desist in his pursuit . . . [122]

Cats' message is severe: occasionally taking a woman against her will might be excusable, but taking a woman with her consent against the will of her parents is punishable by death. This is likely because abduction accompanied by seduction was seen as far more dangerous than violent abduction because the former is more difficult to prevent and because it requires the daughter to act treacherously toward her parents.[123] Thus, despite the fact that Cats supported the marriage of a wealthy young man who committed rape and the young woman he assaulted so long as she was of similar social status, he also declared the possibility that parents

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[121] ". . . de Rechten duydelick seggen, dat een Dochter ontschaeckt sijnde, schoon het bleecke, ja schoon sy selfs verklaerde sulcks met haren wil geschiet te sijn, dat sulcks den schaker geensins en soude verlossen van de strafe des doots, uyt redenen, dat hy niet en heeft gehad de bewilliginge van de ouders, ofte de gene die macht over de Deerne waren hebbende . . . want komt de bewilliginge van de Dochter in geen achtinge, als hy die met haeren wille ontschaeckt heeft, om hem van de straffe des doots te verlossen, vermits hy niet en heeft gehad dese toestemminge van de Ouders, soo en moest (soo het schijnt) aen de andere sijde de onwille van de Dochter niet beswaren de sodanigen, die gehadt heeft den wille van de gene die over haer en haer lichaem te seggen hadde." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 37–8.

[122] ". . . hier in ons land is geweest een dochter van een voortreffelick persoon, en doen ter tijt een aensienlicken staet bedienende, de welcke, nae haere vervoeringe, met den persoon, die haer vervoerde, gevangen sijnde, verklaerde de waerheyt sulks te wesen, dat sy self een wagen hadde gehuert, en, met haer Kamermaeght daer op sittende, den Jonckheer (die haer werde geseyt ontschaeckt te hebben) selfs hadde versocht de reyse met haer te willen doen, soo als het naderhant geschiedde. En des niet tegenstaende, de vader van de selve Jonckvrouwe scherpelick aenhoudende, ten eynde dat 'er recht en straffe geoeffent soude worden, hadde het stuck soo verre gebracht, dat het Hof in pointen stont, om de Jonckheer van levende lijve ter doot te wijsen, en sulcks ware sekerlick al geschiet geweest, ten ware de Vader, door tusschenspreeckende Vrienden versacht sijnde, af hadde gelaten van sijn vervolgh, en dat daer op vergeef-brieven voor hem bekomen waren geweest." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 38.

[123] Vigarello, 152–3.

might avenge this offense.[124] This reinforces the idea that parents dominate their children, both male and female, at least until their sons marry and become patriarchs in their own right.

Cats also seemed to temper his position in favor of parental power over children through his support of the Heidelberg Catechism. As do most other Dutch domestic conduct books from this period, Cats insisted that the consent of the young is necessary.[125] In Cats' words:

> The parents never could and cannot abuse their power over their children, nor can they force a man or wife upon a child against the latter's will; rather, the willingness of the one that one wishes to give away, must be achieved. In this case there must be no mutual discord.[126]

However, Cats also echoed Perkins' assessment that in practice, the unwillingness of the children could be ignored because the elders could assume that their children would consent in time.[127] Cats employed the example of Jacob and Leah to demonstrate that in spite of Laban's treachery they did eventually consent to their union:

> . . . no marriage can be understood to exist without the willingness of both parties involved, it is also so that someone who is led astray, cannot be understood as willing; from which it follows that in the situation of Jacob, Leah could not have overwhelmed him; thus it follows that he is not beholden to Leah as her husband . . . So these two became spouses, not through sleeping together, but from the willingness that followed.[128]

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[124] One can find more examples of vengeful parents in Cats, "Aenmerckingen over Ontstelde Dochters," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 124–6. It is also important to note that these examples conflict with legal scholar, Van Leeuwen's statement: "He who forcibly carries away a daughter, is subject to lose his life. But if it be done with her consent it is not punishable." Van Leeuwen, ed. Claas Isaakszoon, 479.

[125] Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, Joshua 15:14 cited by Witte and Kingdon, 185, see also 173; Bullinger, 14; Taffin, 213; Perkins, 71; Hommius 414; De Swaef, 109; Van Renesse, 9, 78; Gouge, 112.

[126] "De ouders vermochten, en vermogen als noch niet hare macht over hare kinderen in desen te misbruycken, en aen deselve, tegen wil en danck, vrouw of man op te dringen; maer de bewillinginge, van de gene, die men uyt wil geven, moetst daer by komen. Immers daer en moeste geen onderlinge tegheheyt wesen." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 38.

[127] Perkins, 69.

[128] ". . . geen houwelick en wort verstaen gemaeckt te konnen werden als met bewillinge van beyde de gene die handelen, sijnde kennelick, dat iemant, die dwaelt, niet en kan verstaen worden te bewillingen; waer uyt dan volght, dat, sondernaeder toestandigheyt van Jacob, Lea hem niet overdrongen en hadden konnen worden; dien volgende dat hy aen Lea als man niet en is gehouden geweest . . . Soo sijn dan dese twee echte lieden geworden, niet uyt het byslapen, maer uyt de bewillinge naderhant daer op gevolght." Cats, "Bedenckingen op Jacobs Houwelijck," "Houwelijck van drien, dat is, de versamelinge in Echten-staet van Jacob, met Lea en Rachel," in *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, ed., Koppenol, 109.

Cats applied this understanding of delayed consent in the story of the women of Shiloh as well. The abductions were clearly forced; the women fled in terror, their clothing and possessions flew off in a chaotic, panicked way, and they made up scores of lies and excuses to avoid being taken. Cats explained that women in this case are like wild birds who are caged: at first they hate their captivity, but soon they forget their previous way of life. He reiterated that the riches of the men win the women's consent, that time eases pain, and that both men and women need to accept the way things are and move on.[129] Just as parents can assume that their children will eventually conform to their will, Cats also posited that the young men from Benjamin were justified in believing that the women they desired would eventually consent.

Marriage: The Antidote to Dangerous Sexuality

In addition to empowering wealthy men by allowing them a reprieve from the legal ramifications of rape and well-to-do parents by granting them greater control over their children's marriages, Cats' advice helped shore up the social hierarchy in yet another way. Cats used stories of rape to shock his audience into preventative action—marry before you rape or get raped. He intended his stories to heighten people's anxiety about sexual violation and incite them to quickly fit themselves and their adult children into the marital mold.

In Cats' bleak conception of human nature, both men and women's bodies craved sexual contact. Unless these dangerous desires were channeled into the safe haven of marriage, most men and women were in danger of sexual corruption.[130] This argument is the extension of the frequently expressed Reformed belief that marriage is God's antidote to humanity's propensity for sexual immorality.[131] Cats' works, in fact, teach that both men's and women's bodies are capable of rape. Contrary to older Christian teachings that held women more responsible for dangerous sexual urges and powers, Cats' assessment that men's and women's bodies had

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[129] Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 37.

[130] Spierling, "Honor and Subjection," 478–479. Hsia, *Social Discipline*, 147. Haks, 11.

[131] Bullinger, Udemans, and Cats all refer to marriage specifically as a medicine to prevent whorish behavior. Bullinger, xix, Udemans, 329, Cats, *Houwelick*, I, 244. The most extensive definition of marriage is in the Dutch edition of the Heidelburg Catechism translated by Festus Hommius. It also includes the belief that marriage exists to help prevent lust and encourage chastity. Hommius, 413–4.

the power to overwhelm the other had the potential to make men and women equally responsible for sexual impropriety.[132] However equal men and women were in terms of natural depravity, Cats ultimately obliged women to shoulder greater responsibilities for preventing rape.

In the seventeenth century, male sexuality was widely understood as aggressive. Acceptable sexual practice suggested that men should be the only actors in pursuing amorous relationships.[133] Cats explained this in his advice to young women through hunting metaphors:

> Never did the good hunter grip the hare when he was resting in his abode. The labor whets the hunter's appetite; He will capture no ducks . . . that come to him willingly. Adversity provides the appeal of the game of love.[134]

When pursued by men, women become a variety of hunted prey in Cats' texts. Men are the lurking, pursuing hunters, such as sly foxes and swift falcons, whereas women are hares, ducks, hens, and doves hunted, pursued, and tricked by their captors.[135] Cats' depiction of romantic courtship formulates male sexual aggression as a natural given. As he described it, rape is a logical extension of normative heterosexuality.[136]

As Cats depicted men's experience of love through labor, hunt, and activity, he conversely cast women's roles as utterly passive. Active expressions of female desire were repugnant as the example of Potiphar's wife demonstrates. Cats stated that instead of attracting Joseph by saying "come sleep with me," she "caused the honorable and good young man to

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[132] Sara F. Matthews Grieco, "The Body, Appearance, and Sexuality," in *A History of Women in the West: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, ed. Georges Duby, Natalie Zemon Davis, and Arlette Farge (Belknap Press, fifth edition, 2002), 65. Ian Mclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), chapter 2.

[133] Gowing demonstrates this is the case in England and Roper for Germany. See Gowing, *Common Bodies*, chapter 3 "Consent and Desire," 82–110. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, 60–64.

[134] "Dit is der minnaers rechten aert, Wat ghy hun biet, 't is al onwaert; Het visken vliet 't gheworpen aes, Noyt goeden wey-man grijpt den haes/ Daer hy sitil in sijn legher rust, Den arbeyt wet des jaghers lust; Hy vangt geen wilt, (het waer hem schant) Dat hem van selfs coomt in de hant, Door moeyte smaect het minnen-spel." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 18.

[135] Cats, "Maegden Roof van de Benjamijten te Scilo," *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 98, lines 74–76; 101, lines 197–198; 104, lines 301–304; Cats, "Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 225.

[136] This is the phenomenon that Catharine MacKinnon understands as the basis of contemporary rape. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). See also Cahill, *Rethinking Rape*.

feel aversion . . . for her."[137] He encouraged young women to hide the affection they might feel to ensure they would not drive away their potential husbands:

> You should not move quickly when it comes to love,
> And even if you want to [love], hold yourself back;
> Know that a hastily-prepared maiden
> Does not appeal even to a lover:
> Because if he too easily attains what he sought
> He fears that he was just cheated;
> Also when the maiden is too fast,
> Then the lover turns quickly away.[138]

Rather than risk alienating a potential mate, Cats advised young women to patiently wait until a man picks them:

> . . . [O] tender Maiden, when you feel your grape bunch ripen in its due time, let it be gripped by its stalk; If an honorable hand plucks your sweet fruit, Say then, openly, I have succeeded. And proceed to be married in due time, with the council of your friends . . . [139]

Like a bunch of grapes, young women must passively wait to be chosen by a man who wants to marry them and then leave the decision of whether to marry him to friends, guardians, and parents.

While demanding young women to appear free of any desire, Cats simultaneously expected this to be a clever façade hiding the passions that resided within them. He wrote that a maiden "must wait expectantly (though it is painful) until she may be grasped." Arguing the same point, his wise maiden Anna explains to another young woman: "Although it may be our own wish and will, even so we should be quiet, until the one

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137 ". . . dat het wijf van Potiphar, op den jongelingh Joseph verslingert wesende, verkeerde gangen in-gingh om hem te trecken, dwaeselick uytherstende in dat haetigh: *kom slaept by my*, het welck onwijselijck den eerbaren en goeden jongelingh (in plaetse van aenlockinge) een vollen afkeer van haer heeft gegeven. Sy moest met bedeckter en langer schreden hebben gegaen, soo gemeynt wort." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 13.

138 "Ghy, weest niet schootich in de min, En schoon ghy wilt, hout u wat in; Weet dat een haest-bereyde maeght/ Selfs aen den minnaer niet behaeght: Want crijgt hy licht'lic dat hy socht/ Hy vreest terstont te zijn bekocht; Oock waer de vrijster is te vlug, Daer gaet den minnaer licht te rug." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 16.

139 "En ghy, o teere Maeght, voelt ghy u Trosjen rijpen, Soo latet op sijn tijt, en by sijn Steeltjen grijpen; En als een eerbaer hant u soete vruchten pluckt, Segt dan, met vollen mont, Het is my wel gheluckt. In tijts, met Vrienden raet, in Echten Staet te treden . . ." Cats, "Wapen-Schilt alle Eerbare Maeghden Toe-ghe-eyghent," *Maechden-Plicht*.

who loves us *as if with violence* wins us over."[140] This is a remarkable demonstration that even when a man courted a woman, Cats thought that the male suitor needed to have the sense that he had violently attained the woman he desired. Instead of being a requirement for marriage as the Heidelberg Catechism maintains, Cats implied that expressions of a woman's willingness and consent were actually inappropriate in courtship. Here Cats clearly conceded that rape was a model of how to initiate all sexual relationships, including marriage.

Since men's natural expression of love was violent, marriage served as an excellent preventative treatment for rape and other sexual immorality according to Cats. There are a number of poems and stories in the *Touchstone of the Wedding Band* in which he made this claim. One husband, for instance, attests to marriage's ability to thwart bad behavior: "... while I was bonded to you in marriage, never did I dishonor a woman, never did I violate a virgin. Although I was young and happy by nature, for you I spared my lascivious youth and happiness."[141] Unlike this character who married quickly enough to prevent sexual immorality, other men—those who did rape women—did not marry quickly enough. The double rapist Menander, for example, says, "really my crime is but impatience," signifying that had he been patient, marriage could have prevented him from raping Tryphose and Jokaste.[142] Cats portrayed Shechem's rape of Dinah in similar terms: "And Shechem must also bear the punishment of his untimely fire ..."[143] In these examples, men violated women because they act too hastily on their sexual urges. Cats employed these stories to incite men to marry before they lost control of themselves and fell prey to the lure of sexual immorality.

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[140] Emphasis mine. "Sy [de maghet] moet verwachten (al ist pijn) Tot datse mach ghegrepen zijn ... Al isset schoon ons sin en wil, Noch dientment sick te houden stil, Tot dat den ghenen die ons mint, Als met ghewelt ons over-wint." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 24.

[141] "... terwijl ick was met trou aen u verbonden, Noyt wijf en heb onteert, noyt maeght en heb geschonden, Dat ick al was ick jongh en vrolick uyter aert, Voor u mijn gulle jeught en blijdschap heb gespaert." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, ed. Koppenol, 17.

[142] "'Mijn Heeren' (is sijn woort) 'siet hier een schuldigh man, Die niet ontkennen wil, die niet versaken kan/ Het droevigh ongeval van mijn onwijse jaren. Eylaes! Ick was te vroegh genegen om te paren. Ick heb, en ick bekent, ick hebbe groote schult, Maer efter mijn misdaet en is maer ongedult." Cats, *Verhalen uit de Trou-ringh*, 46, lines 111–116.

[143] "En Sichem nevens hem moet oock de strafe dragen/ Van sijn ontijdig vyer, en ongetoomde lust, Daar ley de gansche stadt te samen uyt-geblusst." Cats, "Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 226.

More surprising is Cats' assessment that women were also capable of violently attacking men. Although he exhorted women to make themselves appear passive in order to attract a husband, he provided many examples in which women's bodies overpowered men. In Cats' estimation, women's faces and eyes were particularly dangerous. His character Menander described this female power as an attractive force analogous to static electricity and magnetism:

> The ambers that draws us [men] are the clear beams that wander from a spirited eye to our faces . . . The lodestone of our souls exists in a noble face, which goes straight to our hearts though no one knows how. Through this our mind is taken from us by force, so that we cannot act against it. Alas! I was abducted and I knew not how it happened, *She raped me first, before I took her virginity*.[144]

Among the numerous arguments Menander provides in his defense, the claim that Tryphose raped him first seems the most extraordinary. Because we tend to assume that abduction and rape are male actions, it is tempting to shift the translation to read that Menander was "carried away" and "overpowered." However, these verbs (*vervoeren* and *verkrachten*) are the equivalents of "to abduct" and "to rape;" Cats played with these words and used them in unusual ways to convince the reader of the alarming power of women's beauty.

In fact, women's beauty is to blame in nearly all of Cats' stories of rape. One of the men who took part in the abduction of the women of Shiloh claimed that it was a maiden's "sweet face" and "excessively beautiful body" that "moved his spirit and captured his heart."[145] Similarly, Dinah's "sweet face and flushed cheeks" had penetrated Shechem's eye, igniting a fiery lust in his heart.[146] Based on this example, Cats extracted the following lesson: "It is when one is heated up by lusts, and gives in to

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[144] Emphasis mine. "Het amber dat ons treckt, dat zyn de schoone stralen, Die uyt een geestig oog in ons gesigte dwalen: De seyl-steen onser ziel dat is een heus gelaat, Dat ons, men weet niet hoe, tot aan het herte gaat. Hier door wert ons gemoet met krachten weg-getogen, Soo dat wy menigmaal hier tegen niet en mogen. Eylaas! Ick was vervoert en wist niet hoe het quam, Sy had my eerst verkragt, eer ick haar maagdom nam." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 83.

[145] ". . . haer soet gelaet, haer over-schoone leden . . . Dat hem den geest beroert, en aen het herte vat." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 16.

[146] "De Sone van den Vorst/ Die treckt uyt haar gesicht een heeten minne-dorst. Hy siet haar soet gelaat, en haar gebloosde wangen, Hy siet haar teere jeugt, en hare frissche gangen, En uyt dit al-te-maal ontstaat een snelle vlam, Die sulcx hem door het oog tot in het herte quam." Cats, "Lof-Sangh op het Geestelick Houwelick van Godes Soon," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 225.

the demands of their desires following the ways of the playful flesh that God sends heavy plagues, through which the violator is violated."[147] The women in these examples were the aggressors who captured, seduced, and violated men, and thereby instigated their own rape or abduction.

While we have noted that marriage prevented men from raping women, marriage did not inhibit women from radiating their perilous sexual power. Cats illustrated this in the short story about Orlande, a married woman threatened by the unwanted sexual advances of a king. Assuming the blame for his attraction, Orlande laments her beauty:

> It would be better if my face was without luster, rather than a fire for all young men, a stumbling block for the youth, a mirror for the villains, through which I see my husband is most highly saddened.[148]

Orlande views her beauty as the source of male lust, temptation, and sexual crime. She interprets her responsibility for tempting men as a need to disfigure her face, which she does through the application of poisonous herbs. Cats' lesson for women in this story is that their beauty emits a powerful force that they can only control by concealing it or hurting themselves.

From the examples thus far, one could argue that Cats granted women only a figurative power to violate and abduct men. However, in the dialogue surrounding his stories in the *Touchstone* he explains that this power is in fact tangible and punishable. To the question of "whether a young man can be abducted," Sophronicus states: "yes; as not only all the learned judges are convinced, but also the high courts and parliaments have many times proved."[149] To prove this point Cats cited the opinion of the prominent, sixteenth-century French judge, Jean Papon, in the case of a young girl, who had no other qualities to recommend her other than:

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147 "Het schijnt of dat haer bly gelaet, Of dat misschien haer vreemt gewaet, Of anders dat haer roode mont/ Aen Sichem wel te sinne stont. Dan noch soo leert oock even dit, Wanneer men in de lust verhit, En geeft de tochten haren eysch/ Na wijse van het dertel vleysch, Dat God dan sware plagen sent, Waer door de schender wort geschent;" Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, I, 252.

148 "'t Is beter dat ick heb een aansigt sonder glans, Als dat ick ben een brant voor alle jonge mans, Een aanstoot voor de jeugt, een spiegel voor de boeven, Waar door ik mijnen Heer ten hoogsten sie bedroeven." Cats, *Alle Wercken*, II, 80.

149 "Ick kome dan tot de vrage by u te berde gebracht, te weten, of oock een jongeling na Rechten mag geseyt werden ontschaeckt te konnen worden, en daer op antwoorde ick met een woort, dat ja; gelijck niet alleenlick de Rechtes-geleerden over-al getuygen, maer de hooge Recht-bancken en Parlementen oock dickmael gewesen hebben." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 89.

> . . . the beauty of her person . . . and her riveting face. [She] concluded a marriage with a young and rich boy still under guardianship . . . Coming before the high court of Paris, the marriage was declared impossible to exist; the young woman scarcely escaped without punishment to her person . . . [T]he mother and her assistants, and the notary himself, who had written the marriage agreement, were all given a hefty fine. In conclusion, the aforementioned Jean Papon says that from this case it is apparent that a man can be abducted just as a woman can.[150]

The young character Philogamus asks Sophronicus to explain:

> . . . how can such be called abduction or rape? . . . [Considering] that no woman can be raped according to the law without suffering some violence to her body, without at least some damage to her, how can such happen to a young man? . . . [That one could] force a man to do something against his right goodwill, I think is one of the strangest claims that anyone could think of; and I think it is well said: *Although the young woman is wayward, the bride still she'll become; But if the young man doesn't want it, the friendship is done.*[151]

From Cats' claim that women can abduct men, Philogamus shifts the discussion to rape and concludes that a woman cannot force a man through physical violence. The adage he cites makes an even stranger shift—from rape to marriage. His use of the term "bride" confirms his sanction of forcing young women into marriage against the requirements of the Heidelberg Catechism. It is not clear whether Cats meant that a young woman could not force a man into marriage, sex, or both.

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150 "Een vryster, seyde *Papon*, niet anders hebbende als de schoonheyt van haer persoon, hadde door haer aenlockende gelaet het beleydt, dat een jong en rijck jongeling, noch onder voogdye staende, met haer een howelick hadde gesloten . . . . De saecke komende voor het hoog gerichte van Parijs . . . het howelick is verklaert, niet te mogen bestaen; de Vryster ter nauwer noot, sonder straffe op haer persoon, ontkomen: maer de Moeder en haer helpers, en de Notaris selfs, die de Houwelickse voorwaerde hadde geschreven, alle verwesen in een merckelicke geldt-boete. Tot besluyt seyt de voor-schreven *Jean Papon*, dat hier uyt blijckt, dat een mans-persoon soo wel ontschaeckt kan werden als een vrouwe . . ." Cats, *Alle de Werken*, II, 90.

151 "Maer hoe kan sulcks doch ontschaecken ofte verkrachten genoemt worden? Voorwaer, indiender eenige gevonden worden die met schijn van redenen derven seggen, dat geen vrou-mensch recht verkracht en kan worden, en geen gewelt in haer lichaem (90) en kan lijden, sonder ten minsten eenige toe-standigheyt, hoe kan doch aen een jongeling sulcks gebeuren? Maer kan 't eenigsins geschieden oock tegen danck in dese gelegentheyt, een man te dwingen om te doen het gene dat niet als uyt recht goetwilligheyt en kan geschieden, dat dunckt my een van de grootste vreemdigheden te wesen, die men kan bedencken; en 't is mijns oordeels wel geseyt: *Al is de Vryster steegh, noch wortse wel de Bruyt; Maer wil de Vryer niet, soo is de vrientschap uyt*." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 89–90.

Answering Philogamous' convoluted question, Sophronicus clarifies that there is another conception of rape in which women use a different type of force to abduct or rape men. He tells Philogamus, "A woman is said to have abducted a young man, although she does not attain him by violence but by deception or flowing words."[152] Women's power can be exercised through language, which penetrates men's ears, much like their beauty that overpowers men by by penetrating their eyes. Unlike men who abduct and rape using brute force, women rape and abduct men through their powers of verbal persuasion.

Cats also demonstrated that women's power to abduct a man could be exercised through musical talent. He related a case in which "a very honorable, becoming, and beautiful young woman" from England was found "guilty of abducting a young Count." Cats described the encounter in this way:

> . . . [B]ecause she was very masterful in playing the lyre and in mixing her voice with [it], she was brought a lyre at the end of the meal and asked to honor the company with a little tune. After some refusal, she began to play, which so pleased the young count sitting right across from her that he . . . offered his right hand, declaring that she had won him, so if it pleased her. This proposal was so bravely forceful that he showed that he was serious . . .[153]

As the English woman's story continues, she recognizes the power she has over the young count, and decides to use it to attract him. When the young man sends for her to play for him again,

> The young woman, strengthened with the advice of her brother, takes up the lyre again, and begins to fish again with the same net as before. The young count being nearby and feeling the same movement within him, again made the same offer to the young woman with great affection . . .[154]

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[152] "Een vrou-mensch werdt geseyt een jongeling ontschaeckt te hebben, schoon sy den selven niet met geweldt, maer met bedrog of vleyende woorden tot haer lockte." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 90.

[153] ". . . een seer eerlicke, bevallicke en aensienelicke Jonck-vrouw . . . beschuldigt is geweest een jongen Graef ontschaeckt te hebben, . . . alsoo sy seer meesterlick op de Luyt wist te slaen, en met het spel van haer stemme te vermengen, werdt haer op 't leste van de maeltijdt een Luyt toegebracht, en met een werdtse versocht, het geselschap met een deuntjen te willen vereeren. Sy, na eenige heusche weygeringe, begon 't werck, waer in sy soo wel beviel aen sekeren jongen Graef, regel recht over haer sittende, dat de selve . . . sijn rechter-hant uyt-stayck, verklarende datse in hem een man gewonnen hadde, soo sulcks haer mochte gevallen, het selve sijn voorstel soo dapperlick aendringende, dat hy toonde dat het hem ernst was . . ." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 90.

[154] "De Jonckvrou, met den raet van haer Broeder gestijft zijnde, maeckte wederom de Luyt by der handt te hebben, en bestondt weder te vissen met het eygen net als voren.

The count offers to marry her twice. The new couple even waits one more night to meet the church official and to share a bed. But Cats equated her musical talent with fishing, claiming that she intentionally aimed to capture the unsuspecting count. According to Cats, this was also the understanding of the seventeenth-century court that convicted her: "the young woman was accused" because the opposition believed that "she had lured him into her net."[155] Her opponents, namely the count's family, argued that she had abducted him by lying "in wait for him" and enticing him. The story ends when, after much disagreement and discussion, the count's parents finally deemed the marriage legal.[156]

To any modern reader it may seem that the count was acting out of free will, but as a minor it is likely that the court deemed his consent insufficient to make the marriage valid. It is noteworthy that his parents employed the understanding of women as dangerous seductresses to challenge a marriage to which they had not consented. This example also demonstrates that Cats both championed the law that privileged the will of the parents and hoped that as long as the marriage was an advantageous one for both families, that the parents would choose to recognize it despite a lack of prior parental consent. Cats believed that parents faced with a marriage they did not sanction should recognize it as valid for the common good in accordance with Roman law on marriage, which states:

> Marriages of those who are in their father's *patria potestas* are not legally contracted without the willingness of their father, but having been

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De jonge Graef daer onttent zijnde, en noch de selve beweginge in sich gevoelende, heeft ander-mael, met groote toe-genegentheydt, gelicke aen biedinge als voren aen de voorsz. Jonck-vrouwe gedaen . . ." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 90.

155 ". . . de jonge Juffrou is beschuldigt geworden, van door het gene voor-schreven is ontschakinge in de persoon van den jongen Grave begaen te hebben, werdende de omstandigheden ten naesten by als voren is geseyt, maer met hatelicke woorden, opgehaelt, en soo geduyt, als of de selve geleyder lage daer op hadde geloert, om den voorsz. Grave in 't net te krijgen, daer het tegendeel van de andere zijde erstelick wierdt gedreven." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 90.

156 "Dese sake verhaelt verdende over tafel van de Heer Ambassadeur van desen Staet, daer ter selver tijdt verscheyde Jonch-vrouwen en andere jonge lieden wesende, wierdt oorsaecke genomen, voor en tegen de Jonck-vrou discoursen te maken, en wierdt sonderlinge daer op gestaen, dat de voorsz. Jonck-vrou ten minsten haer eygen ouder eerst kennisse hadde behooren te doen van de sake . . . Maer andere meynden, sulcks verschoont te konnen werden *ex praesumpta mente parentum*, vast stellende, dat de selve, om de gansch vorderlicke gelegentheyt, stil-swijgende, moeste verstaen werden hier in bewilligt te hebben, ja dat de selve . . . beschuldigt souden hebben van gebreck van oordeel; vermits sy soo schoonen kans haer vruchteloos hadde laten ontglippen . . . na lange moeyelickheden en tusschen-sprake van vrienden, het houwelick eyndelick by de ouders van den Graef voor goet is erkent." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 90.

> contracted they are not undone: for consideration of *publica utilitas* [public convenience or the common good] is preferred to the *commoda* [interest] of private individuals.[157]

Once again, for Cats, the action that benefited the common good and the Republic was the advisable one, in this case even if this worked contrary to the goal of a powerful patriarch.

The Burden of Rape Prevention

The fact that Cats believed that both men's and women's bodies were capable of overpowering the other, raises the question: who did Cats more frequently hold responsible for rape prevention? What is clear from the stories examined thus far is that Cats often excused men from culpability. Since the proper exercise of men's sexuality was aggressive, Cats viewed rape as a natural expression of hasty male sexuality. Cats explained that love, impatience, and youthful enthusiasm drove men to rape. Conversely, he blamed women's beauty, deceptive words, and musical talents for the rape and abduction of young men. As we examine his advice on rape prevention we see that Cats—in contrast with other Reformed authors—compelled women to bear most of the burden of responsibility.

Religious precedents provided Cats with other alternatives when assessing responsibility for sexual immorality and attack. In his sermon on Amnon's incestuous rape of Tamar in 2 Samuel, Calvin provided several examples of dangerous male lust, highlighted men's responsibility to control their evil desires, and offered no word of blame for Tamar.[158] For Bullinger, the early Reformer, rape occurred when a man deflowered a virgin—an understanding that left no room to hold women accountable. He advised men to avoid this kind of immorality by not looking at women.[159] Van Renesse's conception of rape was fulfilled when a woman was forced into a marriage without her consent, a claim that held the prospective husband and perhaps the woman's parents accountable.[160] Both Udemans and Hommius focused their censure on the rapist by providing examples in which God punished him harshly.[161] To further emphasize

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157 *Pauli Sententiae* 2.9.2 from FIRA, 345. Cited by Moses, "Livy's Lucretia," 66.
158 Calvin and Kelly, *Sermons on 2 Samuel*, 627–628.
159 Bullinger, 20, 26.
160 Van Renesse, 9.
161 Udemans, 326. Hommius, 400.

the innocence of raped women in general, Hommius offered two Bible passages in which the women involved in rape were explicitly deemed innocent.[162]

Not only did Reformed authors hold rapists accountable, they also expected parents to help prevent rape. When Calvin expounded on Dinah's rape, he concluded that her father, Jacob, should have kept her at home.[163] Taffin agreed about Jacob's responsibility to protect Dinah. Moreover, he believed that David should have prevented his children, Amnon and Tamar, from being in each other's company and that the parents of the women of Shiloh should not have permitted their daughters to dance.[164] Teelinck wrote that parents should drive all immorality out of their households including ostentatious dress, dancing, and singing in order to enforce a strict discipline that would presumably impede sexual immorality.[165] He also charged parents with encouraging children to marry at the proper time.[166] The majority of Reformed domestic conduct books exhorted parents and husbands to keep their daughters and wives at home, to allow them only a little chaste social interaction, to ensure they dressed in modest clothing, and to fill all their idle time with housework and needlework.[167] Of these prose domestic conduct books, only Udemans' possibly assigned women some blame for rape. In a long tirade against dancing, he briefly claimed that this sin had made Dinah and the women of Shiloh susceptible to rape, but he did not mention whether it was the women's or their parents' responsibility to prevent the women from dancing.[168]

While Cats shared the belief that parents ought to help ensure the chastity of their daughters, his advice to women is in some ways more restrictive than that of the Pietist ministers.[169] Holding women responsible for

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[162] Hommius, 403.

[163] "[F]athers of families are taught to keep their daughters under strict discipline, if they desire to preserve them free from all dishonor." Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, Gen. 34:1; Witte and Kingdon V. I Courtship, Engagement, and Marriage, 263.

[164] Taffin, 212.

[165] Teelinck, *Noodwendig Vertoog*, 198. For similar sentiments see also: Bullinger, 78 and Taffin, 125.

[166] Teelinck, *Den Christelïcken Leytsman*, 99.

[167] Bullinger, 78; Teelink, *Noodwendig Vertoog*, 202, Udemans, 279; Hommius, 367, 410.

[168] Udemans, 280.

[169] Ilja Veldman finds similarly restrictive messages in her analysis of Dutch engravings from this period: "In the story of David and Bathsheba the man is the culprit; in the story of Joseph it is the woman who commits adultery. Even so, in practice it turns out that the commandment to preserve chastity or the admonition to avoid lustful feelings is primarily reserved for women." Veldman, 119.

rape prevention, he asked them to limit their own activities. For example, when Cats moralized about Dinah's rape, he blamed her for her desire to wander outside her home:

> [Jacob's] daughter desired to go wandering, to see the ways of the land, and what kind of people there were in the impure surroundings; She went first through the field with her maidens, She went also thereafter into the fortified cities, She saw, and she was seen . . .[170]

Leaving her home out of curiosity led directly to her rape. Elsewhere, Cats criticized Dinah's playfulness:

> [Dinah] is violated because she goes out to play. Alas! There she lost all her glory, There she lost her tender virgin bloom, There she lost her wreath, and proud crown, Ah! That is the wage for playing.[171]

The lesson for other maidens is that they are responsible for staying home and avoiding playfulness in order to avoid rape. Cats also likened young women to farm animals in order to teach them how to safely make their way to the marriage market:

> It does not fit our status [as maidens] well to walk the streets extensively; It is also not advisable for a maiden to stand often in the doorway or in windows . . . It becomes a maiden to be still. In this way she will be worthy of praise; So stay in the house, hold there your court: And wait until you are sought out there, Those most often in the field are the least often sold. It is an adage everywhere: The best cows you find in the stall. And, the sheep that goes through the thistles progressively loses its wool.[172]

Why is Cats' advice so insistent that women stay home? Did Dutch women follow this advice?

In fact, it is not likely that many women, if any, strictly followed Cats' advice during the seventeenth century. This display of domesticity was

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[170] "Sijn [Jacob's] dochter wert belust on haar te gaan vermeyen, En om te mogen sien de wijse van het lant, En wat men voor een volck daar in de vlecken vant; Sy gaat eerst door het velt met hare maagden treden, Sy gaat oock naderhant tot in de vaste steden, Sy siet, en wort gesien . . ." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 225.

[171] "Sy is door spleen-gaen geschent. Eylaes! Daer bleef haer gansche roem, Daer bleef haer teere maegde-bloem, Daer bleef haer krans, en fiere kroon, Ach! Dat heeft spleen voor een loon." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, I, 252.

[172] "Noch voughtet qualijck onsen state/ Gheduerich drillen achter straet; Ten is een maeght oock niet geraen/ Veel in de deur of vensters staen . . . Het vought een maeght te wesen stil. Dus wildy zijn van goeden lof, Soo blijft in huys, hout daer u hof: En wacht tot ghy daer wert gesocht, Waer' meest gheveylt, wert minst vercocht. Het is een spreeckwoort over al, De Beste koeyen vint m' op stal. En, 't Schaep dat door de Doornen gaet, Gestaegh yet van sijn wolle laet." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 66–67.

not something all Dutch women could enact. In spite of the trend to exclude women from craft production, many families relied on women's work outside the home, especially in urban market production.[173] Moreover, between 10–20 percent of Dutch women were lifelong single women who did not have the economic means to work at home.[174] Even women with the financial capacity to practice this domestic ideology did not fully devote themselves to it. Many Dutch paintings reveal that the borders between the spaces of the middle-class home and of the world are more permeable "than the prescriptions of domestic literature would suggest."[175] As women carried out daily tasks before windows and in courtyards, they performed domestic behavior for their neighbors. In this way, women attempted to "maintain a successful image of conformity" and simultaneously policed other women's behavior.[176] Cats' insistence that women stay in their homes thus bore little resemblance to the reality of most women's lives. That he and others often repeated this mandate demonstrates that it is an attempt to alter the behavior of a particular group of women who had the economic means to work at home.

Cats offered similar advice in the description of the following emblem:

> Tell, little Sheep, tell; what reason is there to complain? Why do you blame these thorns? I see that the trip has not gone well. I see your best fur is plucked out in clumps; If only you'd have stayed by the others, or in your stall, then no thorn bush would have caught your coat. But see! The maiden yells angrily, how did this villain get me? [When she] let him in herself.[177]

Considering that Cats intended each of his emblems to be interpreted on at least three levels—the literal, the romantic, and the divine—this image warns about the damage done to wandering livestock, the sexual violation of women who leave their homes, and the likelihood of humans to sin

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[173] Howell, 43.

[174] Kowaleski, "Singlewomen . . . The Demographic Perspective," 34.

[175] Martha Hollander, *Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 176, 199.

[176] Elizabeth Alice Hoenig, "The Space of Gender in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting," in *Realism Reconsidered*, ed. Franits, 195. See also Hoenig, "Desire and Domestic Economy," *The Art Bulletin* 83 (2001): 294–315.

[177] "Ey segh eens, Schapje segh; wat is 'er al te klagen? Wat geefje doch de schult aen dese doren-hagen? Ick sie dat u de reys niet wel en is geluckt, Ick sie u beste vacht met vlocken uytgepluckt; Maer hadje by den hoop, of in de kooy gebleven, So hadder niet een braen aen uwe vacht gewreven: Maer siet! Het meysje riep, als met een grammen sin, Hoe kom ick aen den boef? En liet hem sellef in." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, I, 140.

Plate 14. Emblem of a Sheep from Cats, *Complete Works*, I, 140.

when they allow themselves to wander into temptation.[178] But the equation of human responsibility for sin and women's responsibility for their sexual corruption transforms women into agents of their own violation even in cases of rape. Cats blatantly argued that women actively instigate their own sexual violation by making themselves available to men. The blame for violation here rests solely on the woman.

Cats underlined women's responsibility to avoid conversation with men as well. He often stated that whenever women allow themselves to be near men, they have to expect negative consequences: "Anna, riper in

[178] Ten Berge, 41. The Latin inscription carries the religious message: "Vitare peccatum, est vitare occasiones peccati." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, I, 140.

wisdom . . . will show the danger into which a maiden may easily fall, who often jokes and mixes with young men."[179] Women who listen to men are also susceptible to temptation: ". . . as a maiden lends her ear, although she does not intend this business, she is yet won many a time through persuasive language. And many . . . often fall into trouble."[180] Thus, it is a young woman's responsibility to avoid conversation in which a man may tempt her *and* it is also a young woman's responsibility to prevent her own words from tempting a man as we have already seen in the case of the English woman who in Cats' understanding abducted a count. This suggests that Cats held women responsible for their own temptation and that of the men around them.

Likewise, women should not touch men according to Cats as he explained in a story about a girl who plays with a bee:

> A young girl tormented by her youth, went to play in a lively field. She picked little flowers here and there, and there was placed in danger by a bee. The young woman had a desire to play. She never gave the little animal a rest. She grasped, and pinched, wherever it went or arose, until she finally got pricked. Then loudly she exclaimed: foul deceit! I only wanted to play with it; I am so affected by your sting that my body swells with bumps. The game is sweet and cures sorrow in a way that does not serve maidens well.[181]

Talking and joking with a man, even when a maiden's intentions are pure, is like playing with a bee. Cats told maidens that they must expect to get stung even if they just want to have fun. As a result of being pricked their body will swell, and therefore mimic the possible results of sexual intercourse. Cats made it sound like men are dangerous animals with whom one cannot play because they have no choice but to sting. It is entirely the responsibility of women to avoid men who are dangerous by nature and likely to hurt and impregnate women.

Cats justified his advice to women by explaining that women's bodies are more susceptible to damage than men's bodies:

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179 ". . . Anna, rijper van verstant, . . . En gaet verthoonen het gevaer, Waer in een maegt wel licht vervalt, Die veel met iong-mans jockt en malt." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 1.

180 "Want als een maegt het oore leent, Schoon sy de saecke niet en meent, Sy wort noch echter menigmael Gewonnen door een soete taet. En veel, die sneger zijn als gy, Die raecken dikmael aen den bry." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, I, 252.

181 "Een meysje van haer jeugt gequelt, Ging spelen door een lustig velt, Het pluckte bloemtjens hier en daer, En wert daer in een Bie gewaer, De vryster hadde spelens lust, Dies had het beesje nimmer rust; Sy greep, een neep, waert liep of week, Tot dats' in 't leste kreeg een steeck, Doen riepse luyde: fel gedrocht! Ick die alleen maer spelen socht; Ben door u pricken soo gestelt, Dat my het lijf tot bobbels swelt, Het spel is soet en heelt verdriet, Ten dient nochtans de maegden niet." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, I, 251.

> Alas! We [Maidens] are so fragile and weak, Just as a fresh Grape vine: Go touch the most beautiful bunch, At once all its sweet blush, That pleasant earthly blue, Will change into dark gray: Because wherever one sets but a finger, There is thenceforth a blemish. Our honor is tender, our conscience is delicate, It therefore must not be handled much.[182]

According to Cats, the slightest of touches permanently corrupts young women. Their bodies, like grapes, are damaged wherever touched because of their fragile nature. It is likely that their natural sexual proclivities will be quickened by this contact, which thereafter are impossible to deaden. Through touch their honor is blighted and their consciences can be negatively affected. Because of all this a maiden must avoid touch at all costs.

In all this advice to young women, Cats implied that women are to blame for their own rape. Dinah should not have wandered out of her home, the sheep that left its stall should not have put itself in danger of being stuck by thorns, and the girl with the bee was stung because she tried to play with it. Men will rape, bees will sting, and thorns will prick and it is a woman's responsibility to recognize how she can avoid these dangerous situations. Cats went so far as to make it a general principal that by not behaving correctly, women invite rape:

> There was never a young woman instantly violated or separated from her chastity, but step by step, and foot by foot, she comes where she must not; One first strikes up a silly conversation, and then in playful exuberance there follows foolish love, and that grows deeper and deeper . . . And once then in a dream of love, when all the lusts are out of check, and between joy and madness, then comes the rat to the bacon: There sits, alas, the foul bride and weeps out her eyes: But it is, oh maidens, too late to complain after the silly deed.[183]

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[182] "Eylaes! Wy sijn soo meeps en wack, Ghelijck een verschen Druyven-tack: Gaet handelt eens den schoonsten tros, Terston sal heel dien soeten blos, Dat aengenaem, dat aerdich blau/ Verandert zijn in duyster-grau: Want waer-men maer een vingher set, Daer is van stonden aen een smet. Ons eer is teer, ons verw'is fijn, S'en mach niet veel gehandelt zijn." Cats, *Maechden-Plicht*, 54.

[183] "Noyt vryster wort terstont geschent, Of van haer kuysheyt afgewent, Maer stap, op stap en voet aen voet, Soo koomtse daerse niet en moet; Men raeckt voor eerst in malle praet, En voorts in dertel ongelaet, Daer uyt ontstaet dan sotte min, En die gaet diep en dieper in, Dies wast de vryheyt des te meer, En groeyt ten lesten al te seer, En eens dan in een minnedroom, Sijn al de lusten uyt den toom, En tusschen vroet en tusschen geck, Soo komt de rat dan aen het speck: Daer sit, eylaes! De vuyle bruyt/ En schreyt dan beyd' haer oogen uyt: Maer 't is, o vrijsters, al te laet/ Te klagen na de malle daet." Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, I, 251.

Women's bodies are always complicit in violation and loss of chastity according to Cats. When a woman talks to a man and is playful, she will also come under the control of "foolish love" at which point she will lose control of herself. Here Cats listed the ways to ensure that lust remains in check: do not go to the wrong places, do not have silly conversations, do not be playful, and do not love foolishly or madly. If a woman does not fulfill these duties, she will be corrupted by the activities themselves and desire sexual contact. Thus, even when a woman laments a sexual encounter, Cats blamed her for instigating her own corruption and encourages her to find fault in her actions.

Concluding Ideas

Due to the immense popularity of Cats' works, he was able to help disseminate the teachings of his Puritan and Pietist influences rather widely. However, it was Cats' innovative move to charge certain men and women with rape that put force behind the religious teachings that certain sexual liaisons were not permitted. Poor men were not allowed free denied access to available women. Young adults were not allowed to freely choose their spouse in spite of the contemporary emphasis on the value of marital affection. And when behaving properly, according to Cats, women were not allowed to act upon their sexual desires or even make them known to the men who courted them. When members of these subordinate groups broke these rules, whether they were male or female, Cats assured his audience that they could be charged with rape or abduction. To invalidate marriages deemed inappropriate and to keep socially inferior members of society in their place, Cats emphasized the fearful sexuality of criminal men and aggressive women.

Cats simultaneously granted wealthy men, who had ample means to support a wife and family, extensive access to available women. Wealthy men could rape and expect to marry women of a similar social standing. In addition, Dutch law overlooked these men's sexual activities with social inferiors, forced or otherwise, as demonstrated by Cats' own dalliances with serving girls as a student in Leiden before his conversion to a more spiritual life.[184] Conversely, women's sexual practices at this time were coming under closer scrutiny by secular and church courts. As long

[184] Boekema-Sciarone and Loonen, 30. Ten Berge, 19–23.

as wealthy men avoided pre-pubescent virgin girls, family members, and young women under their guardianship, the worst they could expect for the rape of a woman of lower status was to have to pay a small fee to compensate for the loss of a dowry.[185]

Cats' literary contributions bolstered wealthy men's claims to available women. Cats' stories denied these particular men the capacity to control their actions at the moment of rape. Their natural urge to act forcefully, to hunt, and to conquer took over; they raped out of love for a woman so intense that they could not wait to marry. Like the example of Menander, whose story commenced this chapter, Cats depicted the young rapist as pitiful, contrite, and worthy of forgiveness. He inspired his audience to yearn for Menander's release and subsequent marriage. Cats thus employed marriage as the means to defuse the socially subversive potential of rape and made it serve the interests of potential patriarchs. Moreover, by highlighting the painful experiences of the rapist and happy resolutions, Cats belittled the impact of rape on women. He failed to pity his female characters and refused to mention the violent impact of rape on women's bodies. Moreover, Cats idealized the outcome of these relationships: none of his rapists became bad husbands and none of the relationships between raped women and their new husbands were impossibly antagonistic. In fact, these relationships were not so different from properly established marriages because of his conception of all male sexuality as aggressive.

Although women did not fully heed Cats' insistence that they restrict their activities outside the home, his advice did have the potential to do harm. His advice incited women to police their behavior, as well as that of other women. More perfidiously, it shifted blame from the men who raped to the victims of rape by arguing that these women had put themselves in danger. According to this logic, a woman was not a victim, but rather an accomplice because she had not successfully protected herself and the men around her. As such, a woman influenced by Cats' teachings had to deal with the trauma of rape as well as the emotional distress of self-blame and failure. Cats' most injurious advice to women contended that rape did not even exist because women who had left their homes had already undergone a process of moral corruption that initiated the process. These women, according to Cats, might express indignation, but that did not alter the fact that they had made themselves vulnerable. Coupled

[185] Vigarello, 17–18.

with the preconceptions that men could not control their aggressive sexuality, that women said no to sex even when they meant yes, that women were lusty, and that forced sex could become consensual, this belief that women initiated rape reveals why it was nearly impossible to convict men of the crime of rape.

Despite the negative implications of rape upon women mentioned thus far, some women stood to benefit some aspects of this rape discourse. By virtue of their alliances with powerful patriarchs, well-to-do women were able to assert power over their children by directing their choice of spouse. Since a woman's social status was inextricably tied to her husband's, the stabilization of his position in the social hierarchy improved hers. In this way, a rape discourse that articulated a husband's power over poorer and single men and women correspondingly augmented his wife's power. In addition, Cats' emphasis on the fearful sexuality of poor, criminal men and of aggressive singlewomen removed wives from suspicion and enabled them to be honored and revered.

Cats was not wholly unconcerned for raped women. As this chapter demonstrated, his stories of rape encouraged men to marry women who had suffered rape, so long as the women shared their social status, including women who had been raped by other men. Although the modern reader may find the idea of a woman marrying her rapist revolting, it signifies an attempt on Cats' part to ensure that these women's lives were not ruined. Cats also advised men to adopt children who were the product of rape in yet another attempt to rehabilitate its victims.

The next chapter turns to Dutch Catholic advice that provided women with a more optimistic outlook on their potential to control their sexuality. As we will see, Catholic priests agreed with Cats that women could overpower men sexually. However, priests depicted devoted Catholic women as capable of both subjugating their own sexual urges, protecting men from their dangerous sexuality, and defending themselves against sexual attack.

CHAPTER FOUR

CATHOLIC ADVICE

Agnes van Heilsbach (1597–1640), a devout Catholic woman and subject of a spiritual biography published in 1691, was nowhere near as famous as the men featured in the previous chapters, but her vita was part of another important literary offensive that employed stories of rape to achieve certain goals. Agnes lived in Roermond, a city not far from Maastricht that was, for most of her lifetime, under the control of Spain. Unlike Catholic women living further north in the Dutch Republic, Agnes had the opportunity to join a cloister. Although she briefly explored this option, she ultimately chose a different type of religious lifestyle. Instead of taking the formal vows of a nun, she chose to become a so-called Spiritual Virgin (*geestelijke maagd*), a religious woman who made a solemn promise to obey her confessor and live a single life in perpetual chastity.

Throughout Agnes' lifetime and beyond, Roermond was caught between the warring powers of Catholic Spain and the Protestant Dutch Republic. Its inhabitants lived under the frequent threat of warfare and plunder as the city changed hands six times between 1572 and 1716. This situation made life particularly uncertain for the Catholic clergy residing in this area. When the States Army occupied Roermond between 1632 and 1637, stadholder Frederik Hendrik, known for his policy of toleration of Catholics, allowed the continuation of Catholic services.[1] However, when the Dutch government took control of the nearby city of Maastricht in 1639, they demanded that the regular clergy take an oath of loyalty to the United Provinces of the Netherlands and exiled anyone who refused to comply.[2]

Due in part to the greater need for religious flexibility that this uncertain situation demanded, Spiritual Virgins were allowed to flaunt the strict rules of claustration the Council of Trent required for religious women in other Catholic countries.[3] Instead of life behind cloister walls,

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[1] Israel, 534–5; Monteiro, 224.

[2] Carlson, "The Public Church in the Dutch Republic," 125–6.

[3] For the Spiritual Virgins further north the canons of the Council of Trent were not binding because these only carried disciplinary force "in lands comprised of parishes within a

Spiritual Virgins cohabited with family members or with small groups of like-minded pious women and worked in the community. They taught children the Catholic catechism, freely offered religious advice and reprimands, funded endowments, and took care of the poor and the sick. Further north in the "Holland Mission" as the Dutch Republic was called, Spiritual Virgins took on even more pastoral tasks.[4] They maintained hidden altars, preached, housed priests and religious services, and undertook any other tasks priests were unable or unavailable to do. Although Spiritual Virgins were not officially recognized by canon law, they were supported by clergymen and esteemed by Catholics throughout the Low Countries.[5]

Members of the Society of Jesus were particularly supportive of this unofficial group of religious women. Known as the militant core of the Catholic Reformation, the Jesuits focused on missionizing through education.[6] Not only did Jesuits frequently provide spiritual leadership of groups of Spiritual Virgins and other lay sodalities, they also wrote the lion's share of Dutch manuals instructing religious women how to dedicate their lives to God. In the books written for and about the Spiritual Virgins, including Agnes' vita, Jesuit priests were substantially overrepresented: at least nine out of some eighteen authors of these devotional guides were Jesuits.[7] Agnes' life in particular was heavily influenced by members of this order: her confessor was a Jesuit as was her biographer, a Jesuit school opened

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Roman episcopal structure." Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008), 42.

[4] The Dutch clergy only began to refer to the Dutch Republic as the Holland Mission in the middle of the seventeenth century. Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, xi.

[5] According to Monteiro's estimate, there were over 5,000 of these women in the northern Netherlands in the seventeenth century. See Monteiro, 120. For more on the lives of these Catholic women see Eugenia Elisabeth Agnes Josepha Maria Theissing, *Over klopjes en kwezels* (Utrecht: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1935) and Elizabeth Schulte van Kessel, "De Geestelijke Maagden van 'De Liefde,' " in *Geest en Vlees in godsdienst en wetenschap. Opstellen over gezagsconflicten in de seventiende eeuw* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1980), 51–91. Carlson "The Public Church in the Dutch Republic," 126. Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 43–44. Jo Spaans, "Religious Policies in the Seventeenth Century Dutch Republic," in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*, 72–86.

[6] They established colleges at a rapid rate: by the time of the death of their founder, Ignatius Loyola, in 1556, there were some thirty-five colleges and by 1626, there were 444 colleges plus 100 seminaries and schools. Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal*, chapter 2.

[7] It is these devotional books written for and about the Spiritual Virgins that provide the evidence for this chapter. They include handbooks on behavior, early Christian and Medieval saints' life stories, tiny combinations of advice and exempla, huge multi-volume martyrologies, and the life stories of two, recently deceased, Spiritual Virgins from just across the border in the southern Netherlands. For a full examination of these sources see Monteiro, *Geestelijke Maagden.*

in her town of Roermond when she was thirteen years old, and the Jesuits supported her legal efforts to attain an inheritance that would allow her to financially maintain herself as a Spiritual Virgin.[8] It was largely from Antwerp—a city whose Catholic revival was fuelled by Jesuit activity, a primary center for Dutch Catholic exiles, and a critical staging ground for the revival of Catholicism in the north—that priests published the instructional books for and the vitae of the Spiritual Virgins.[9]

Fittingly for a devotional work intended to spark a revival of Catholic piety in the Holland Mission, Agnes' biographer portrayed her as a powerful Counter Reformation saint fully capable of warding off sexual attack. Remarkably, her methods did not conform to the type of behavior often associated with devout Catholic women. When Agnes was threatened with sexual advances, she issued violent threats and delivered physical blows. For example, one day when Agnes was in the attic of her home chastising her flesh as penance, a nobleman came "searching for her with evil intentions." When she realized what was happening, she quickly:

> . . . closed the attic trapdoor. This was scarcely done before the Nobleman tried to overpower it. Noticing the trapdoor had no lock, Agnes stood on top of it, warning him that he should not be so bold as to come any further, unless he wanted his eyes in his hands. He did every violent thing he could to open the trapdoor, but through the help of God . . . and his Holy Mother . . . [Agnes was] so heavy that the impure person could not open the door in the least [and so] he left.[10]

Perhaps even more telling, her biographer included another example of Agnes' violence: "If someone indicated by words or by other means suggested he had impure intentions, Agnes unexpectedly punched him in the face."[11] Much more like a militant Jesuit than a post-Tridentine nun, Agnes violently rebuffed sexual attacks and advances. While Agnes serves as an informative example of the advice priests doled out to Spiritual Virgins, as this chapter will demonstrate, she was by no means the fiercest.

By examining these occasionally surprising instructions for Spiritual Virgins on how to preserve their purity, this chapter will illuminate the

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[8] Monteiro, 211–213.

[9] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 28–29. Alfons K.L. Thijs, *Antwerpen Internationaal Uitgeverscentrum van Devotieprenten 17de–18de Eeuw* (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), 41.

[10] Daniel Huysmans S.J., *Leven ende Deughden vande weerdighe Agnes van Heilsbagh gheestelycke dochter onder de bestieringhe der Societeyt Iesu* (Antwerpen: Michiel Cnobbaert, 1691), 35–36.

[11] "Als haer jemandt door woorden oft andersints eenighe onsuyvere genegentheyt te kennen gaf, kreegh dien van Agnes onverwachts eenen kaeck-slagh." Huysmans, 36.

fact that these women were vital to the Counter Reformation in the Low Countries through both their active ministry and through the prestige they imparted to the Catholic faith. Priests championed the Spiritual Virgins as symbols of the superior power of the Catholic faith to transform weak women into superheroines of purity. Priests who idealized these Spiritual Virgins in print used their lives to demonstrate the truth of Catholic practices contested by Protestant doctrine, including the value of lifelong celibacy, the power of the saints, and the continuing occurrence of miracles. For Catholics, the Spiritual Virgins recalled the tradition of the early Christian virgin martyrs who offered themselves as female sacrifices in a time of apostasy. However, as this chapter demonstrates, the Spiritual Virgins were powerful, living sacrifices, capable of protecting themselves and thus fitting vanguards of the Counter Reformation in the Dutch Republic.

Intermittent Catholic Persecution

Whether the coexistence of Catholics, Calvinists, and other religious groups in the Dutch Republic demonstrated a precocious religious tolerance has been the subject of extensive debate.[12] On the one hand, Dutch officials frequently failed to enforce anti-Catholic edicts and this allowed Catholics in the Republic to live with less fear of persecution than those living in any other Protestant country in post-Reformation Europe.[13] On the other hand, the States General closed all cloisters, confiscated ecclesiastical property, and outlawed all Catholic activities by the early 1580s, including "the Roman Mass, any Catholic gathering, teaching Catholic

[12] See Hsia and Van Nierop, eds., *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*. For an outline of the historiographical trends of this debate see Spaans, "Religious Policies in the Dutch Republic" in this volume. See Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, (especially chapters one and two) for an excellent assessment of the debate on religious toleration and a sensitive analysis of the impact of occasional violence on Dutch Catholics.

[13] Christine Kooi's formulation is helpful: "As losers of the Dutch Revolt and Reformation, Catholics experienced toleration at best negatively as the absence of persecution; it was that occasional absence that gave them some flexibility. The accommodation, the opportunity to worship that they constantly strove for, was a hard-bitten negotiation with political, legal, and religious authority, and was always in danger of being lost or taken away. Because the possibility of toleration was always in flux, Catholics were forced to demonstrate considerable flexibility in their efforts to worship freely." Kooi "Paying off the Sheriff: Strategies of Catholic Toleration in Golden Age Holland," in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*, 90.

doctrine, distributing 'papist' literature, studying at a Catholic university, and having a priest perform baptism or marriage."[14]

The situation generally improved for Catholics as the seventeenth century progressed.[15] Many Dutch Catholics retained their wealth and there were still large minorities of Catholics even in the Protestant stronghold of Zeeland, the villages around Leiden and Alkmaar, the eastern provinces, and the southern provinces of North Brabant, Maastricht, and Overmaas.[16] Although confessionalization intensified conflict between Catholics and Protestants during the first quarter of the century, the second apostolic vicar of the Holland Mission, Phillippus Rovenius (1614–1651) successfully reorganized the Dutch Catholic Church.[17] The number of priests active in the Republic grew from seventy at the beginning of the century to 482 by 1634.[18] There was also marked improvement in the fate of Catholics in the Republic at the end of the war with Spain in 1648 and a vital and growing membership at that time as well. By 1656, the number of Dutch Catholics had increased to 450,000, which was about a third of the total adult population, a number that rivaled the size of the membership of the Dutch Reformed Church at that time.[19]

Despite the Catholic community's success in fighting their way back after the meltdown of the 1570s and 1580s, we should not underestimate the impact of occasional violence on the outlook and practices of Catholicism in the Dutch Republic. Persecution shaped Catholic identity into the first quarter of the eighteenth century.[20] Catholics experienced violence

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[14] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 47.

[15] For a historiographical overview of the early modern Catholic Church in the Netherlands see James D. Tracy, "With and Without the Counter-Reformation: The Catholic Church in the Spanish Netherlands and the Dutch Republic, 1580–1650," *Catholic Historical Review* 71 (1985): 547–75.

[16] Huizinga, 50.

[17] Hsia defines confessionalization as "The formation of religious ideologies and institutions in Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Catholicism . . . the articulation of belief systems, recruitment and character of various professional clerical bodies, constitution and operation of church institutions, and systems of rituals. Confessionalization refers to interrelated processes by which the consolidation of the early modern state, the imposition of social discipline, and the formation of confessional churches transformed society." Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation*, 5.

[18] Israel, 378, 388–9.

[19] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 17–18.

[20] Pollmann pinpoints the development of a separate Catholic identity in the 1580s, an impulse that intensified after 1609 when the Twelve Years' Truce facilitated travel between the northern and southern provinces, which in turn highlighted the confessional and cultural differences between the Netherlanders from the north and south. Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 122, 189.

against their faith not only in the loss of church buildings, the need to worship clandestinely and often at night, by witnessing the mistreatment and incarceration of their religious leaders, and in a host of other ways, but also through their diminished hopes of attaining salvation due to their loss of access to the sacraments.[21] Because of these experiences, the clergy recognized the need to convincingly demonstrate the truth and efficacy of the Catholic faith rather than strictly demand obedience from a laity that remained loyal out of choice. Clergy renewed the emphasis on saints' lives and miracles—two pillars of the Catholic faith that Protestant theologians rebuffed—as a means of garnering lay support and effectively challenging Protestant doctrine.[22] In so doing, priests created an "identity of suffering and hardship for the faithful in a land full of heretics."[23] The Catholic laity, like the early Christian saints, lived lives of martyrdom in the Protestant Dutch Republic.

Violent Virgins

Catholic priests' support of the Spiritual Virgins attested to the fact that they continued to believe in a spiritual elite that could transcend human nature, be sexually pure, and not marry. The Council of Trent conferred spiritual authority to celibate Catholics, who were meant to be a small minority of the Dutch Catholics in the seventeenth century. The majority accepted the conditions and requirements of their supposed natures and lived a married life. The Catholic hierarchy was characterized by a "celibate priesthood, which solemnizes marriage and makes it a sacrament" at the top, followed by "women who have eschewed a sexual life, either virgins or widows;" and subsequently followed by married persons.[24] The priests who wrote about the Spiritual Virgins granted these celibate women a more exalted position in part due to the inability of priests to be very visible in contemporary Dutch society. For example, Arnoldus Steur, a Dominican who began to work as a missionary to the Netherlands in

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[21] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, see introduction and especially 13.

[22] Pollmann, 166, 175. Israel, 390. Willem Frijhoff underscored the importance of miracles within the Catholic subculture in buttressing a sense of identity, security, and vindication in an unfriendly Protestant environment. Willem Frijhoff, "La fonction du miracle dans une minorite catholique: Les Provinces-Unies au XVII^{e} siècle," *Revue d'Historie de la Spiritualite* 48 (1972): 160–1. Cited by Kooi in Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation*, and Hsia and Van Nierop, eds., *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*, 98.

[23] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 19.

[24] Weisner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality*, 107.

1616, was taken prisoner by the Protestant authorities in Groningen and then preached in Friesland and The Hague, authored a book for these pious women. He explained the value of their celibacy by declaring that all those who were able to "deny their very nature . . . more closely resemble angels" than they did married humans and were blessed with a "glorious and exceptional virtue." Steur also clarified why more did not seek the angelic virtue of virginity by saying that people were generally more likely to "follow the inclination and affection of their flesh rather than the counsel and the witness of the spirit."[25]

Being part of a spiritual elite allowed Spiritual Virgins to reject the negative stereotypes associated with most women. These religious women were in many ways similar to medieval beguines; both groups were allowed to live religious lives outside of cloisters because priests believed that they could overcome their supposed female weakness and inconstancy.[26] For example, according to her biographer, Joanna van Randenraedt, who lived in the southern Netherlands in the seventeenth century and whose life story would be read by Spiritual Virgins living in the northern Low Countries, did "not only exceed other women, but also the strongest men . . ."[27] The priests believed that God brought about this change in female character. Wilhelm Schoenius, a pastor of several areas in the Dutch Republic during his career, including East and West Blokker, Zandaam, Edam, and Amsterdam, wrote: "When [a virgin] is bonded to her promise to such a strong God . . . she will not be weakened, because she knows that holy help will come to her from all sides to preserve her Purity."[28] Schoenius explained that on the first step toward purity a virgin "is still uncertain of victory, because with the help of grace she has to fight the fire of the flesh, the appetite of desire, the world's instigation of impurity, and the impetus

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[25] "Soo en wordt ons niet bevolen dwelc ons Nature heel is contrarien maer ons wordt gheraeden/ dat wy den Enghelen door ghelijck worden. Daerom soo moet die Maecghdelijcke reynigheydt wel wesen een glorieuse deucht/ ende sonderlinge deucht . . ." Arnoldus Steur O.P., *De lelie der maeghdelijcker suyverheyt, seer nut ende profijtelijck voor alle godtvruchtighe maeghden die de suyverheydt zijn beminnende* (Antwerpen: Guilliam van Tongeren, 1622), 2.

[26] Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to woman Christ: Studies in Medieval Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

[27] ". . . niet alleenelijck andere vrouwen, maer oock de sterckste mannen te boven ghegaen." Huysmans, *Kort begryp des levens ende der devghden vande weerdighe Joanna van Randenraedt geestelycke dochter onder de bestieringhe der Societeyt Iesu* (Antwerp: Augustinus Graet, 1690), 334.

[28] Wilhelm Schoenius, *De Weg der Suyverheyt van d'Hollantse Maegden* (Antwerpen: voor Philippus van Eyck [Amsterdam] 1676), 78.

of the Evil Spirit."[29] With God's grace a Spiritual Virgin could overcome her lusty flesh. Once she had successfully fought the flesh with the help of God, she could be more certain of her resolve to maintain her purity.

However beneficial elite spiritual status was seen to be, Catholic priests also emphasized that maintaining this status was very trying. For women, the chief concern was maintaining sexual purity. Priests considered it more difficult for a woman to maintain her virginity than to marry. As the Catholic priests saw it, Spiritual Virgins fought a life-long battle. Most women married in order to ensure their purity; they had visible proof that their sexuality was channeled in an acceptable way. Young girls had their visible youth, which was proof of their purity. Even religious Catholic males had a shorter struggle with purity. The seventeenth-century Dutch evidence supports the assertion by historian Caroline Bynum that Catholic "male lives are complete when virtue is won, evil defeated or restitution made." These men conquered impurity during specific moments of self-chastisement. But "women's lives can be complete only when death has assured perpetual virginity."[30] Joachum van de Putte of the Society of Jesus in Antwerp shared this gendered explanation: "As long as we are weighted with this brittle, mortal body [and] so long as we carry this costly treasure of purity in brittle earthenware vessels, there can be no certain victory."[31] Although he uses and inclusive subject, he wrote this book for devout women and employs the metaphor most frequently associated with women's bodies, often implying that women are very fragile and useless once broken. In the end, Van de Putte suggested that virgin women were only certainly victorious after death. Van de Putte's example demonstrates that even though priests recognized the Spiritual Virgins as an exceptional group of women who overcame their female flesh, they still continually tied these women to the problems of female sexuality.

Catholic priests taught Spiritual Virgins that sexual attack was something they might face. Wilhelm Schoenius, a priest in Edam, for instance,

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[29] Schoenius, 87.

[30] Caroline Bynum, "Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages," in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body I*, ed. Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), 175.

[31] "Also lange als wy met dit sterffelijck broossce lichaem behangen sijn/ so lange als wy desen costelijcken schat der reynicheyt in broossce aerdene vaten dragen/ so en macher geen sekere victorie sijn." Joachum van de Putte, *Eenen claren Spiegel der warachtigher christelijcker maechden, waer inne zij volcomelijck muegen mercken, hoe zij dat inwendige aensicht haerder zielen moeten vercieren begeeren zij dat Christo Jesu haren bruydegom sal behagen* (Antwerpen 1551), 3 recto.

in his *Way of Purity of the Maidens of Holland* of 1676, told Dutch Spiritual Virgins to protect themselves from others who were out to get them:

> Beloved Reader, condemn the venom-suckers. Be on guard against nasty teeth, evil lips, slanderous tongues, malicious eyes, darkened desires, noble dispositions full of self-conceited wisdom, as you consider going on this spiritual Path of Purity.[32]

He alerted his audience to the many threats against their physical purity. A wide range of evils existed to deter them from their spiritual path. Schoenius also described how God preserves virgin purity when other people threaten it. He wrote:

> We are able to assemble many beautiful examples of Virgins who were sought to partake in unchaste actions through promises, fears, threats, and violence; yes even directed to do it openly; and that they nevertheless were not dishonored through the help of God their Bridegroom and his Holy Angels.[33]

Schoenius advised Spiritual Virgins that there were evil men who wanted to take women's chastity through promises, fears, threats, and violence, but God was able to save them.

The most shocking advice priests wrote for the Catholic Spiritual Virgins was that when threatened with sexual advances, they should fight to kill their attacker. Several priests, such as Huysmans (whose biography of Agnes commenced this chapter), explicitly instructed Catholic virgins how to fight off attackers. Valentinus Bisschop, a Jesuit sent to the Netherlands as a missionary in 1621, recounted in *The Praise of Purity* (1626) the stories of two model virgins and then proceeded to give specific instructions on how Catholic virgins should violently oppose their attackers:

> One virgin . . . struck a priest who wanted to kiss her with the back of her hand in the face drawing blood and thus fended him off . . . [The second virgin] who came into the same danger by a Sergeant, dashed him on the head with a pestle (with which she was busy working) in order to drive him away from her . . . [Of the ways to protect your purity] the very best of all is

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[32] "Beminde Leser versmaedt the venijn-suygers. Wacht u voor nijdige tanden, boose lippen, lasterige tongen, arge oogen, verdonckerde verstanden, hoovaerdige geesten vol eygen goetdunckende wijsheydt, als ghy door dese geestelijcke Weg der Suyverheyt denckt te gaen." Schoenius, 6 in section entitled "Tot den . . . Leser."

[33] "Wy souden hier noch konnen stellen veel schoone exempelen der Maegden/ die van de Tyrannen door beloften/ vreesen/ dreygementen/ en gewelt/ tot de onkuysheydt versocht zijn geweest; ja openbaerlijck daer toe verwesen; en dat sy nochtans niet onteert zijn geweest/ door hulpe van Godt haren Bruydtgom/ en sijnder H. Engelen." Schoenius, 85.

> to do what the two aforementioned Maidens . . . did; drive the foul flatterer away from you . . . with a backhand, or with a short stick. Hear this Maiden, whoever you are. Immediately use all your fingers as rapiers, your hands as swords, your arms as iron clubs your feet as poles, and all that you can seize. With spears and lances defend yourself and bravely chase away your challenger with all weapons. But if it happens that you cannot do it like this, take a knife and hurt him. Yes, stab him dead if that is necessary and if it is the only way to get out of his power. This is permitted in such a case: all the [Church Fathers] teach this: because I am allowed to kill a thief in the night who steals my money, how much more he who violates [or rapes] my Purity, considering the value of the thing stolen in this case.[34]

While traditional teachings tell Christians to metaphorically arm themselves with the armor of God as Ephesians 6:10–20 exhorts, it is difficult to imagine early modern Catholic women expecting to kill attackers. Yet this is precisely what Bisschop advocated. He encouraged religious women to contemplate rape, to plan how they would react if attacked, and to be ready to hurt and even kill an attacker. Bisschop reassured the Spiritual Virgins that this was not wrong and that it was the best way to ensure their purity.

Other priests advised this as well, especially Joannes Lindeborn, Franciscus van Schonenberg, Schoenius, and Johannes Fredericus Lumnius. Lindeborn, a priest trained in Cologne and a pastor in Utrecht during the second half of the seventeenth century, advised religious women to act like soldiers who had to "bravely deter the enemy if he attacks" by

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[34] ". . . twee diversche Maegden/ van de welcke d'eene (na 't schrijven van Cantipratanus) heeft eenen sekeren Priester/ als hy haer wilde kussen/ met eene averechte-handt voor 't aensicht gheslagen to den bloede toe/ ende soo vanhaer gheweyrt . . . maer de andere in't selve perijckel ghekomen zijnde by eenen Sergeant/ heeft hem met den stamper (daer sy mede in't werck besigh was) op 't hooft te smijten/ van haer verdreven . . . het alder-beste noch van allen/ als dit niet en helpt/ is te doen dat die twee voornoemde Maeghden . . . dusdanighe vuyle pluymstijckers oft pluymstrijcksteren met eene averecchte handt/ oft met eenen korten kluppel van u wegh te drijven. Hoort ghy Maghet/ wien ghy zijt: in sulck eenen stont dat al uwe vingeren u zijn voor poignaerden/ uwe handen voor sweerden/ uwe armen voor ijsere knodsen/ uwe voeten voor hant-boomen/ ende al't ghene ghy kont aengrijpen/ voor spicie ende lancien weyrt u hier mede kloeckelijck ende wilt uwen aen-vechter met alle wapenen verjaeghen. Maer is't dat ghy 't soo noch niet en kont ghedoen/ neemt een mes/ neemt ende quetst hem/ ja steeckt doot is 't dat van noodigh is/ ende ghy niet anders sijne macht kont ontgaen. Het is gheoorloft in sulck een gheval dit te doen: soo leeren alle de Doctoren: want is 't dat ick magh den nacht-dief vermoorden/ die mijn gelt stelt/ hoe veel te meer den verkrachter mijnder Suyverheyt/ aengesien het goet 't welck hier ontrooft wordt . . ." Valentinius Bisschop S.J., *Den Lof der Suyverheydt (. . .) Van Nieuws overseen ende verbetert, Het Tweede Boeck* (Antwerpen: Hieronymus Vedussen 1626), 197, 199.

"fighting away scandalous and dishonorable lust and foul images."[35] The virgin "should not only offer an enemy opposition, but even clamp onto and attack him."[36] Schoenius concurred with this suggestion that women take the offensive and echoed Bisschop's admonition to the virgins to use their bodies and any weapon available: "Strike without hesitation even though he be severely injured or remain dead; you do not sin here . . ."[37] Van Schonenberg, a pastor of the *beguinehof* in Aalst and Joanna van Dedemaecker's confessor, championed her violent response. In her vita, he recounted that she "violently fought off" a lusty cow herder by "scratching his face terribly." Although she successfully maintained her physical purity, he angrily responded by dislocating her shoulder.[38] Schoenius, like Bisschop, also stressed the right of the virgin to kill when threatened with rape because of what is at stake, namely the "costly treasure, which once lost cannot be regained in eternity . . . [and] in order to forgo the greatest danger of all [which is] consenting to the fleshly sensuality with sin, that is embedded in such a stealing of Purity."[39]

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[35] "Het ander officie van een Soldaet is . . . den vyand so als hy aenvalt/ dapper af te keren . . . als iemand u tot onkuische dingen aenrand/ alleens gelijk een krijgs-knegt van haer afgevaerdigt/ oft als sy u schandelijke en oneerlijke gepeinsen en vuile verbeeldingen ingeeft." Joannes Lindeborn, *De Leeder Jacobs: De Maegden, die Godt met opzet van eeuwige Reinigheit in de Wereld dienen, toegepast* (Antwerpen: Michiel Cnobbaert voor Joachim van Metelen [Amsterdam], 1670), 256.

[36] "Het laetste officie eens soldaets is niet alleenlijk den vyand weerstand te bieden/ maer selfs hem aen te klampen en aen te vallen." Lindeborn, 258.

[37] ". . . en slaet toe/ schroomt hem niet/ al soude hy daer door bedorven zijn/ of doodt blijven; ghy doet hier geen sonde . . ." Schoenius, 95.

[38] ". . . eenen Koeywachter haer iet willen aen-doen, dat tegen de eer-baerheyt was; doch sy stelden haer daer teghen met alle ghewelt, ende crabden hem schrickelijck in sijn aensicht, waer door hy soo vergramt wiert, dat hy met sulck een cracht op haer lichaem spronck, dat daer door een schouder uyt de note onsloot . . ." H. Franciscus van Schonenberg, *Het Seltsaem ende wonderbaer leven van Joanna Dedemaecker Eertyts Beggyntjen in't beggyn-hof van Aelst. Dienende in desen tyt als eene perfecte modelle voor alle beggyntiens ende Godt-minnende Sielen* (Mechelen: Jan Jaye, 1662), 72. Frans de Potter and Jan Broeckaert, *Geschiedenis der stad Aalst: voorgegaan van eene historische schets van 't voormalige Land van Aalst. Geschiedenis van de gemeenten der provincie Oost-Vlaanderen* (Gent: C. Annoot-Brackman, 1875), 417. Sarah Moran, "Unconventual Women: Religion, Politics, and Image in the Court Beguinages, 1585–1713" (PhD diss., Brown University, 2010).

[39] "De Catholijcke Leeraers leeren eempaerlijck dat oock een Maget mach sonder sonde doodtslaen oft doorsteecken den roover van haer Suyverheydt/ als hy haer soeckt te verkrachten/ en sy anders die kostelijcke schat niet kan bewaren/ die eens verlooren zijnde/ in der eeuwigheydt niet wederom gekregen kan worden: te meer/ oock om te ontgaen het alder meeste perijckel van te consenteren in de vleeschelijke wellust met sonde/ dat in soodanige beroovinge des Suyverheydts gelegen is." Schoenius, 94.

Plate 15. Yael from *The Song of Praise* from Herbertus Rosweydus, *The Life of the Holy Virgin and God's Mother Maria, princess of Maidens*... (Leuven: Francois Fabri voor Pieter Jacobszoon Paets [Amsterdam] 1629), 31 recto. Amsterdam University Library, OTM: O 61-9077.

IVDITH
Ghy zijt de glorie van Ieruſalem. Ghy zijt de
Blijdtſchap van Iſrael. Ghy zijt de heerlijck-
heydt van onſe volcke. *Iudith* 15.

Plate 16. Judith in *The Song of Praise*, 36 recto. Amsterdam University Library, OTM: O 61-9077.

Priests also provided Spiritual Virgins with biblical examples of violent women in the advice manuals. In these, biblical women, including Yael and Judith, saved their people by murdering a powerful male enemy. For example, plate 15 depicts Yael killing an enemy leader by piercing his head with a tent peg and thereby saving the Israelites. The caption explains how this can be instructive to later women: "In this way must all your enemies be overcome saith the Lord." Yael is thus a positive expression of female violence in reaction to hostile threats. Plate 16 features Judith similarly killing an enemy leader and proudly displaying his severed head in her right hand. Here the caption reads: "You are the glory of Jerusalem. You are the happiness of Israel. You are the most distinguished of our people." Again the image and text praises a woman who murdered a powerful man. Although neither of these biblical women had exercised violence in response to sexual threats, Catholic priests used Yael and Judith as role models for the violent physical acts Spiritual Virgins were to undertake to preserve their purity.

A Martyr's Reward

Not only did priests tell the Catholic Spiritual Virgins that they were capable of fighting off rapists, they also assured the women that they could be safe from rape in other ways. Priests agreed that as long as women did not consent to sex, they would remain virgin even after rape. Johannes Fredericus Lumnius, pastor and reformer of the beguine community in Antwerp, instructed women that they could suffer rape and remain pure. He offered the positive message that women could refuse to give their consent and subsequently rape would not sully the victim's sexual purity. Lumnius explained that the heart consents to something, according to Saint Augustine, "when we praise and want it."[40] He further explained that: "... as long as internal honor remains through which the exterior parts of the body also deserve to be venerated as holy, the violence of

[40] "Angela: Wanneer consenteert het herte? Bonaventura: Dan consenteren wy dit/ seyt voorts Augustinus/ als wijt mede prijse ende willen." Joannes Fredericus Lumnius, *Van dleven der christeliicker maechden, vier dialogi, dat is tsamenspreeckinghen van twee persoonen: Ghemaeckt by Ioannem Fredericum Lumnium Pastoor des Beghijnhofts T'Antwerpen. Noch een Boecxken vanden H. Doctoor Ambrosius Bisschop tot Melanen, ghescreven aen een Maghet die tot val ghecomen was, door den selven nu eerst in duytsch overghesedt* (Antwerpen: Plantijn 1571), 243.

another's lust can not take away the body's holiness."[41] Lumnius wrote at length that someone who "loses her honor unwillingly and with violence" would not:

> . . . be robbed of her virgin reward . . . even though her being may suffer violence and be violated in such a manner . . . [T]rue virgin purity cannot be sullied or taken by another's lust without the lust of the one who suffers it. Just as has happened in some times of war or in the pursuit of churches that honorable daughters and Spiritual Virgins are attacked by mad people with force, who nevertheless gave neither provocation or consent and thus do not lose the reward of virginity. Because whatever the body suffers (says Augustine) with force, without preceding lust may be called more of a torment than corruption . . . Because if a heart neither consents nor allows it, no one can violate the honor of the body.[42]

Lumnius made it clear that a woman could retain her "true virgin purity" as long as her "heart neither consents nor allows it." He also argued: "no one can violate the honor of the body" except with the permission of the person in question.

Lumnius, following Saint Augustine, applied this to Lucretia: if she had been Christian, she would not have needed to commit suicide.[43] He wrote that according to Saint Augustine, Lucretia did not kill herself ". . . out of

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[41] ". . . want also langhe als het propoost des eerbaerheyts blijft van binnen/ waer door oock van buyten het lichaem verdient gheheylicht te worden/ so en ontneempt het ghewelt van een anders wellust den lichaem sijn heylicheyt niet." Lumnius, 249.

[42] "Angela: Maer oft yemant van ons liedens/ onwillich ende met ghewelt haer eerbaerheyt quijt ghink/ soude die daerom ooc vanden maechdelijcken loon berooft worden? Bonaventura: Neen . . . alsoo dat die natuere ghewelt mach lijden/ ende in sulcker vueghen geschent worden/ maer die waerachtige maechdelijcke suyuerhz en can door een anders wellust/ sonder wellust des gheens/ diet lijdt/ niet besmet worden/ noch ghenomen. Ghelijck alst somwijlen ghebeurt/ in tijt van orloghe/ oft van veruolghenisse der kercken/ dat eersame dochteren ende gheestelijcke maechden met cracht van rasende menschen worden ouerullen/ die welc nochtans hier toe gheen oorsaec en gheuen noch consent: waeromme sy ooc den loon des maechdoms niet en verliesen. Want het gheen/ dwelck het lichaem lijdt (seyt Augustijn) met fortsen/ sonder voorgaende lust/ mach meer een quellinghe/ dan een corruptie ghenoempt worden: . . . Want als het hertte dat niet en consenteert/ noch toe en laet/ soo en con niemant deeerbaerheyt des lichaems ghevioleren." Lumnius, 241–242.

[43] For a discussion of Saint Augustine's and other Church Fathers' ideas on the possibility of suicide as a means for religious women to preserve their virginity when threatened with rape see Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, "The Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," in *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 31–38. For more on Saint Augustine's impact on later discussions of rape see Amy Greenstadt, *Rape and the Rise of the Author: Gendering Intention in Early Modern England* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 15–22.

love of honor, but out of weakness in not wanting to be shamed." Lumnius believed that she took her life to demonstrate her pure conscience. Christian women would not have to do this "... because they have the eyes of their God within them as the witness of their consciences which is the glory of Purity."[44] Moreover, using the words of Saint Augustine, Lumnius advised women to:

> ... have no sorrow nor be disgusted with your life even if your purity has been violated or ridiculed by your enemies. You have a great and just solace since your conscience is assured because you have given no such consent.[45]

Thus a woman should be comforted by a certainty that she had not consented.

The examples of Saints Theodora and Agnes demonstrate virgins' ability to be sure that they would not be tempted to consent if raped. The authors of their stories expected these saints to retain their purity despite their presence in brothels and the threat of imminent rape. In his translation of Pedro de Ribadineira's massive collection of hagiography, the Jesuit Heribertus Rosweydus, known as a hagiographer, church historian, and teacher at a number of Jesuit colleges, wrote specifically that Theodora could not be contaminated no matter what happened:

> They led her to the place of impurity so the Virgin may be raped, but not sullied, because wherever she was, she was a temple of God; and in a scandalous place her purity would not be violated, but it erases the impurity of the place and appropriates it for God.[46]

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[44] "... seyt Augustinus/ haer seluen ghedoot heeft/ een heeft sy niet ghedaen wt liefde der eerbaerheyt/ maer uyt crancheyt dat sy niet beschaemt en soude worde ... haers selfs doots/ moest wesen een ghetuyghe haerder onnooselheyt voor den menschen/ den welcken sy haer conscientie niet en cost vertoonen. Maer dit en hebben Christen vrouwen niet gedaen/ die nu noch leuen/ seyt August ... Want sy hebben van binnen voor dooghen van haren God/ het ghetuyghe haerder conscientien/ dwelc die glorie der suyuerheyt is ..." Lumnius, 246.

[45] "... hebt gheen verdriet noch walghinghe van u leven/ al ist/ dat u suyverheyt van u vianden ghescoffiert oft bespot is. Een groot ende oprecht solaes hebt ghy/ dat u conscientie versekert is/ dat ghy gheen consent alsulcken en hebt ghegheuen." Lumnius, 247–248.

[46] "Sy leydden haer dan tot de plaetse der onkuysheydt/ alwaer de Maghet mocht verkracht/ maer niet besmet worden: want op wat plaetse sy was/ was sy eenen tempel Godts; ende in eene schandelijcke plaetse en wordt de reynigheydt niet gheschent/ maer dese vaeght uyt d'onkuysheydt der plaetsen/ ende eyghent Gode die toe." Pedro de Ribadineira and Heribert Rosweydus, *Generale legende der heiligen: Grondt-reghel der volmaectheyt voor-ghestelt in de kennisse ende verbeteringhe der daghelijcksche sonde: aen alle die trachten near eene besondere suyverheydt der sielen.* Sixth ed. (Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1686), 488.

Even if raped, Theodora's body would not have been violated, but rather she would have had the power to sanctify an unholy brothel. And elsewhere, her biographer stated, "if the body suffers any disgrace, purity is not lost as long as the will did not give its consent."[47] Like Lumnius, Rosweydus was certain that if raped, these religious women would not consent and therefore would not suffer impurity. After his conversion to Catholicism, the playwright Vondel echoed this sentiment as well. In his *Letters of Holy Virgins* (1642), he explained that Agnes would be safe despite a stay in a brothel: "Whenever one violates the body, The soul remains still virgin, Through the unstained will."[48] Vondel concurred with Rosweydus and Lumnius that the body would not be violated if no consent had been given. In his letter from Saint Aacht, he wrote:

> And thus the cruel one rips a breast from my ribs. I cry: 'O subjugator what do you see with your eyes! You have suckled from your mother's breast, a woman's breast, And now you unashamedly violate the breasts of a virgin? But this one has another breast, one which she wears internally, Consecrated to Heaven that which you will never violate!'[49]

Vondel had this virgin claim that there was not only an interior purity, but also an entire internal virgin body that she had consecrated to heaven and which was thereby safe from consenting to or even making contact with any human. Vondel suggested that when a virgin withheld her consent, not only her mental purity but also her interior bodily purity was maintained. Noteworthy, however, is that in spite of the belief that Theodora, Agnes, and Aacht were safe from the sexual threats each faced, this theory

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[47] "Ende oft't lichaem eenighe schande leedt/ soo en wort de reynigheyt niet verloren/ indien den wille daer in gheen consent en gheeft." Ribadineira and Rosweydus, 443.

[48] "Wij oogen op een Maagd en zeestar, t' effens moeder/ Van 't wonderbare Kind, den zekersten Behoeder/ Der menschen, die zoo licht zijn maagden redden kan, Terwijl uw Vesta slaapt, gelijk haar leeuwgespan; Dat nooit zijn manen schudde, of heeft bestaan te brullen, Daar nonnen, dag en nacht, de blinde lampen vullen/ Met olie, die den nacht der doling niet verjaagt. Wanneer men 't lichaam schendt, zoo blijft de ziel nog maagd/ Door d' onbevlekten wil." Vondel, *Brieven der Heilige Maeghden*, in *De werken van Vondel. Vierde deel 1640–1645*, ed. Johannes F. Sterck (Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1930). For more on Vondel's conversion see Pollman, "Vondel's Religion," in *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679)*, edited by Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (Brill: European History and Culture E-Books Online, 2012), 85–100.

[49] "Zoo rukt de wreede een borst van mijne ribben af. Ik riep: o dwingeland wat ziet gij met uw oogen! Gij hebt uw moeders borst, een vrouwenborst, gezogen, En schendt gij onbeschaamd de borsten van een maagd? Maar dees heeft nog een borst, die zij van binnen draagt, Haar Heiland toegewijd, die zult gij nimmer schenden!" Vondel, *Brieven der Heilige Maeghden*, 8–9.

went untested in these hagiographic tales because God always stepped in to save the virgin martyrs from rape.

Because it was possible for a raped woman to maintain her physical purity, some priests even claimed that rape could benefit a Spiritual Virgin. So long as their consciences remained inviolate, their suffering could be considered a worthy martyrdom:

> These hand maidens of the Lord . . . who have lost their honor through force are made more praiseworthy by humility and shame . . . Since all sins originate from the will, the unwilling heart cannot be contaminated through such tarnishing of the nature.[50]

Lumnius provided the example of Lucia who told a tyrant who intended to send her to a brothel, "If you violate me against my will, the honor will make me worthy of a double crown. One I will receive for my virginity, the other for the violence that I will suffer."[51] Egidius Gerardi, who became a Jesuit in 1613 and is known for one advice manual, stated this as a general principal: "the more of a struggle, the more crowns; the more work, the more reward."[52] According to a number of priests, raped women were able to maintain their purity and even benefit from their sexual violation through their suffering.

Purity and Impurity

Thus far it seems that the priests shared our modern conception of rape as a physical attack in which a woman does not give her consent to a sexual act. The priests also seemed to want to lessen the Spiritual Virgin's fear of rape as well as to ameliorate its emotional effects by telling violated women that they might still be virgin. However, when one considers this priestly advice, it appears to be contradictory. Why did they encourage

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[50] ". . . .Die dienst maechden (seyt hy) des heeren die haer eerbaerheydt met fortsen hebben verloren/ sullen prijsbaerder door ootmoedicheyt ende beschaemptheyt worden . . . Want hoe wel alle sonden haeren oorspronc nemen uut den wille/ ende het herte onwillich door sulcke bederf der natueren niet besmmet en can worden." Lumnius, 248–249.

[51] "Ist dat ghy my doet schoffieren teghen mijnen wille/ ende teghen mijnen danck/ deerbaerheyt sal my een dubble croone ghereet maken. Een sal ick ontfanghen voor mijn maechdom: een voor het ghewelt dat ic lijden sal . . ." Lumnius, 245.

[52] "Hoe meerder strijdt/ hoe meerder kroon; hoe meerderen aerbeydt/ hoe meerderen loon." A. [Egidius Gheeraerdts] Gerardi S.J., *Den Spiegel van Philotea, ende der Godtvruchtighen zielen* (Antwerpen: weduwe van Jan Cnobbaert, 1646), 72.

religious women to kill attackers if their virginity was not lost through rape? And why, if a woman could spiritually profit from rape, did they provide such shocking advice? Even though priests had to empower an extraordinary group of Spiritual Virgins to do the tasks that the priests themselves were no longer permitted to do, they still fundamentally distrusted these women's bodies. Priests told Catholic women that external threats were not in fact the worst of their worries. The most frightening possibility was that a woman's own flesh could betray her and hurt the men around her.

Although the reader of the seventeenth-century priestly advice to Spiritual Virgins is immediately struck by their concern with avoiding physical attack, these works also contain a number of mechanisms to downplay its seeming danger. Schoenius, for example, explicitly diminished the likelihood that it might occur. He stated: "not many Virgins' purity is challenged openly by other people." He followed his chapter on physical threats to purity with, in his words, a more important chapter on averting "the internal temptations of the flesh which all pure hearts will repeatedly experience in this life."[53] All of the priestly advice moderated the apparent danger of rape by making it only one of three types of threats. Steur, for example, in *The Lily of Virgin Purity*, explicitly listed these threats to female purity:

> No one should be so malicious and fearless that he should want to [impurely] burn . . . the Virgin body . . . Because it is written: if someone defiles the Temple of God [which the virgin body is], God will destroy him. A Virgin will also well understand that she must not allow God's temple to be dishonored by her carelessness and that she must not be a stumbling block or hindrance to her brother.[54]

There was a broad consensus among priests that in order to remain virgin, impurity had to be fought in three steps. First, religious women could fight

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[53] "Al is't dat er veel Maegden/ soo opentlijck van andere menschen tot onkuysheydt niet bevochten worden/ gelijck in 't voorgaende Capittel is verhandelt; nochtans soo sal sy al de inwendige tentatien des vleeschs niet ontgaen/ van de welcke alle Suyvere herten in dit leven meermaels worden bestormt . . ." Schoenius, 96.

[54] "Niemant en sy soo boos/ en onghevreest/ dat hy den Tempel des Heeren/ dat is/ het Maeghdelijck lichaem/ ende daer in die alder-costelijcste siele/ d'alder H. juweel dat in Godts Tempel is/ met den Brant der wellusten ende dertelheydt/ als een ongeloovich mensch soude willen verbranden. Want daer staet geschreven: ist dat jemandt den Tempel Godts schent, dien sal Godt schenden. Een maeghet sal oock wel voor heur sien/ dat sy deur heur onachtsaemheyt den Tempel Godts niet en laet onteeren: ende dat sy heuren broeder gheen struycksel oft arghernisse en stelle [I Corinthians 3:17]." Steur, 220–221.

against physical attacks with God's help. Second, they had to be very careful to control any internal temptation of their flesh and, third, they must not tempt others.[55] Therefore, Spiritual Virgins had to be wary not only of possible physical attack, but also of every sexual feeling they had and that others might have toward them.

This passage provides a rare moment in which the fearsome sources of impurity are finally clear. More often, advice for Spiritual Virgins slipped between how to avoid physical attack and how to avoid the temptation of oneself and others, so much so that it is impossible to examine priestly advice on how to avoid rape separately from their advice on how to avoid temptation. By blurring various forms of sexual temptation with rape, priests subtly constructed rape as a long-term process of mental and physical temptation that the Spiritual Virgins, despite their efforts to fight impurity, might not have the power to withstand. The priests provided Spiritual Virgins with a long list of ways they needed to try to prevent sexual impurity, starting with maintaining their internal purity.

The priests told Spiritual Virgins that to preserve their purity they had to try to control both their bodies and their minds. Priests based these ideas on Saint Augustine's definition of virginity in which he included a number of mental or spiritual factors. The priests concurred with his emphasis upon an idea of "total virginity," or "*integritas*," which included "the interior disposition of the virgin, as well as her physical incorruptibility."[56] Several of the priests explicitly discussed the significance of intentions in maintaining purity. Lumnius explained: "whoever has a virgin body must also work to have a virgin soul."[57] Steur agreed that a virgin body was not enough. There is more to purity than physical virginity. He writes: "... out of pure and holy thoughts comes purity."[58] Schoenius made the same point: "The description of a virgin is one who has a holy body and soul, because it is not useful to have a Virgin body if one marries in thought."[59] Pure thoughts and a virgin soul were necessary for a Spiritual Virgin to get her heavenly reward.

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[55] The five authors who focus on purity, but do not include how to fight off external attacks, are Gerardi, Kemp, Lindeborn, Smidt, and Steur.

[56] Schulenburg, 50.

[57] "... hy naden lichaem maghet is/ die moet arbeyden ooc nader sielen maecht te zijn." Lumnius, 261.

[58] "... wt suyveren ende heylighen gedachten/ comt die Reynicheydt voorts." Steur, 72.

[59] "De beschrijvinge eener Maget is: Heylig zijn aen lichaem en ziel, want het en baet niet met het lichaem Maget te zijn, als men met de gedachten trouwe." Schoenius, 100.

Spiritual Virginity was also much less certain than physical purity. Schoenius, for example, stated that a woman was impure if she had had so much as an "impure and unchaste thought, knowingly and intentionally."[60] How could one be certain whether or not one had had an impure thought intentionally? The author of *A Rule through which like a Mirror Christian Virgins . . . May Come to True Internal Beauty*, echoing the admonitions of many others, exacerbated the uncertainty. He encouraged Spiritual Virgins to ". . . investigate your conscience twice a day."[61] A virgin had to frequently search for any impure thoughts or intentions. The belief that virgins might have intentions that were not obvious to them likely engendered doubts as to their own sincerity. Joanna van Randenraedt, for example, believed that she suffered great pain because she had not fought an "affection for a young man" hard enough. As soon as she realized the problem, Joanna pledged herself only to God who taught her in a fatherly manner how carefully "she must protect her heart from the love of all creatures."[62] The text does not recount any details of Joanna's physical temptation. It could simply be that she questioned her own intentions so intensely that she blamed herself for no fault. Priests encouraged this kind of self-doubt. Cornelius Musius, whose original Latin text *Institution Foeminae Christianae . . .* of 1536 was translated into Dutch in 1690, advised religious women to have a "complete mistrust of yourselves, and realize that without God's mercy, a small wind of temptation will smite you underfoot and play with you just as the wind with some dust."[63] Musius explained that women

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[60] "Als den mensch onsuyvere en onkuyssche gedachten, wetende en willens overdenckt, om dat hy daer genoegten in heft, sonder wedestrijdinge des consents . . . So wie een Vrouw aensiet om haer te begeeren, die heft met haer overspel bedreven in sijn herte." Schoenius, 99.

[61] "Ondersoect u conscientie tweemael sdaechs . . ." *Een regel waar duer als een Spieghel, die Christelijcke maechden met Gods gratie soude moghen comen tot waerachtighe inwendighe schoonheyt, om also haer Bruydegom Jhesu Christo te behagen, ende van hem die Croon des levens te ontfangen* [ca. 1583], 8.

[62] ". . . sy een invallende genegentheydt tot eenen Ionghman, die nochtans niet ontuchtigh en was, te seer inghevolght, en niet terstont verstooten en hadde. Sy liet haer dan voor-staen, dat dese mensechelijke genegentheydt, al-hoe-wel sonder mengelinge van eenigh quaedt, waerlijck en met reden de oorsaecke was van soo bittere, ende langhdurende pijnen: ghemerckt dat sy wist, dat Godt alleen haer herte gheheelijck besitten wilde. Sy heeft . . . haer sleven plichtich bekendt voor sijne ooghen; ende hem ghelooft ende ghebenedijdt, dat hy soo Vaederlijck, en soo ghenaedelijck haer gheleert hadde, hoe neerstellijck dat sy haer herte bewaeren most van alle liefde der schepselen." Huysmans, *Kort Begryp*, 17–18.

[63] "Hebt een volkomen mistrouwen van u selven, en houd voor gewis, dat, ten sy God u door sijn genade vast houd, een klein windeke van bekoring u onder de voet sal smijten;

were capable of internal virginity only through the help of God and without that help women were likely to give in to temptation.

Though more difficult to preserve and rather uncertain, this mental and spiritual virginity was controllable and redeemable, according to Catholic priests. Schoenius told maidens how to control their thoughts: "When a maiden is tempted by internal temptation of the flesh, even if it be through an impure movement of the body, she does not have to shake her head or ridiculously wave her hands or feet so that others notice."[64] She should, according to Schoenius, count the floor tiles, think of heaven and hell or of Judgment Day, and pray. This would take her mind off of the temptation and allow her to maintain her mental purity. Schoenius and Lumnius also explained "whomever lost their virginity through their thoughts can get it back."[65] The way a virgin could regain her internal purity was "through penitence, changing the will, renewal of the intention to henceforth live always serving God as a Virgin. And [they] can also receive the crown [rewarded to] Virgins [in heaven] . . . after [starting] a new pure life."[66] Spiritual Virgins who had committed sexual sin in their minds could chastise themselves and return to virginity once again. This was not true for those who engaged in real physical sexual acts. Surprisingly, Schoenius spelled out the idea that:

> . . . through natural communion of the flesh of a Man and a Woman and through the voluntary contamination of the body virginity is also lost . . . although God can do all things, he cannot restore a Virgin after she falls. He can deliver her from the punishment, but he will not crown what has been spoiled.[67]

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en met u sal spelen gelijk de wint met een hoop stof." Cornelius Musius, vert. R.H., *Maagde pligt, ofte de ware maagd* (Antwerpen: voor Hendrik van Rhijn te Delft, 1690), 26.

64 "Als een Maget dan door inwendige bekoringe des vleeschs wort bevochten/ al is 't oock met onsuyvere beweginge des lichaems/ soo behoeft sy haer hooft niet te schudden/ noch handen ofte voeten belachelijck te roeren/ dat en ander het merckt . . ." Schoenius, 96.

65 ". . . die met syn ghedachten den maechdom verlooren heeft, mach die vvederom vercryghen." Lumnius, 252.

66 ". . . dan kan die weder gekregen worden van de Maget door penitentie/ en veranderinge der wille/ en vernieuwinge des Propoosts om in de Maegdom voortaen altijdt Godt te dienen: kan alsoo de kroon der Maegden . . . na een nieuw suyver leven ontfangen . . ." Schoenius, 102.

67 ". . . natuerlijcke gemeynschap des vleeschs van Man en Vrouws-persoon/ en door vrywillige besmettinge des lichaems wort de maegdom alsoo verlooren . . . al vermach Godt alle dingen, hy en kan een Maget, na den val niet verwecken. Hy kan haer wel verlossen van de straffe, maer hy en wilt niet kroonen die nu bedorven is." Schoenius, 101.

According to Catholic priests, physical sexual sin, while redeemable, precluded a virgin reward in heaven, while mental sexual sin did not.

Priests made it clear that one could be sure of a Spiritual Virgin's purity by viewing her exterior. They believed the passageway between the exterior and interior to be so direct that the interior could be seen on a person's face and conversely the exterior could easily penetrate a person through the senses. According to Wilibrord Kemp, a priest writing in the early eighteenth century: "A Maiden should be so demure that anyone who lays eyes upon her directly thinks of God, and is encouraged to love virtue."[68] Kemp further explains that when a maiden's eyes are on God, he will reflect out of her eyes. Franciscus de Smidt, a Jesuit who preached, taught grammar, translated and wrote a variety of religious texts during the first half of the seventeenth century, also made this point, addressing Spiritual Virgins and employing the oft-used image of a mirror: "... you have loved the beauty of purity so much, that you have been a beautiful mirror ... to many others."[69] Their interior purity and focus on God was externally visible through the passageway of the eyes, making the Spiritual Virgin a mirror of God for others. Fulgentius Stevins, an Augustinian who became a missionary to the northern Low Countries in 1692 and after 1695 worked in Amsterdam, stated that if a Spiritual Virgin must speak to men, she should not "boldly look at them, smile at them, or show any friendliness, because that is a sign that she does not sincerely preserve the Virgin shame and honor in her heart."[70] By her behavior and the look on her face, a Spiritual Virgin was able to manifest a sincere interior.

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[68] "Een Maeght behoort soo zedigh te zyn, dat den genen die d'ooghen op haer laet vallen, aenstonts op Godt dencke, en aengeleyt worde om de deughden te beminnen. [quote s. Basil de virg]." Willibrord Kemp, *Zede-lessen voor de Maegden, die, haer zelve aen Godt opgedragen hebbende, trachten volgens de plichten van de maegdelijcke staet te leven: Vergadert uit Gods Woord, en uit de Schriften der heilige Vaderen; En tot een t'zamenspraek tusschen Christus en een Maegd, opgestelt door W.K* (Utrecht: Theodorus van den Eynden 1710), 111.

[69] "... ghy hebt de schoonicheyt vande suyverheyt soo bemint, dat ghy aen vele andere eenen schoonen spieghel ende verwecksel gheweest zyt." Franciscus de Smidt S.J., *Van den salighen staet der genen die in de werelt Reynicheyt beloven* (Antwerpen: Cornelis Woons 1650), from 'Vermaen tot de Devote Maeghden, folio 6 verso and 7 recto following the numbering from the preceding section 'Dedicatie'.

[70] "Indien 't nogtans gebeurt, dat sy nootsaekelyk met ongelyke persoonen moet handelen en aenspreken ... sy sullen dan haer oogen wel bewaeren, en geene soodanige stoutelyk aensien, of ook die toe lacchen, of eenige vrindelykheyt bewysen: want dat is een teeken, dat sy de Maegdelyke schaemte, en eerbaerheyt des herten niet opregt bewaeren." Fulgentius Stevins, *Regel voor de geestelyke Dogters, voornamelyk in de Hollandsche Sending, van de Derde Orden der Eremyten van den Heyligen Vader Augustinus, met verscheyde*

Priests told Spiritual Virgins that they had a mutually exclusive choice: to allow only God to penetrate their interior through all the five senses, or to allow only the outside world. Above all, priests advised women not to let impurity enter the portals of the eyes. Lindeborn, for instance, admonished virgins to:

> . . . keep your eyes pealed and be alert concerning the senses ([or] gates of the soul) so that nothing can sneak in to lead [you] away from purity by clever deception: as through broken windows, the five senses are the entrance to the soul: only when the enemy army breaks through the gates can the city of the soul be taken.[71]

Schoenius repeated the idea that Spiritual Virgins had to keep evil at bay. He explained that by "misusing the senses, death climbs through the windows to destroy your soul; immediately turn your face and senses away . . ."[72] In other words, Schoenius admonished these women to prevent evil sights and sounds from penetrating their eyes and ears so that they could keep these from penetrating their souls. Because the seventeenth-century Dutch understood the eyes and other senses to be the passageways between the human exterior and interior, the senses served as a direct path for both evil and good to enter a person.

Priests directed Spiritual Virgins to pay particular attention to keeping their eyes only on God so that only he could penetrate their souls. Lindeborn used the words of Bernard to tell virgins to ". . . raise your face to no one, only to your God."[73] Gerardi, a Jesuit since 1613, emphasized this same point: ". . . always have God before your eyes . . . and do not ask too much from the eyes of people."[74] Lindeborn employed the words of Saint Ambrose to paint an image illustrating that women must alter their experience of the flesh by closing themselves: "A closed courtyard, O daughter

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Gebeden, Litanien ende eenige levens der voornaamste Heyligen van't selve Orden (Amsterdam: Willem van Bloemen, 1705), 22. For an explanation of "ongelyke" see Schoenius, 104.

71 ". . . op de wacht staen en staeg een wakend oog hebben op de sinnen (poorten van de ziel) dat niets insluypen mag/ waer van de suiverheit listen geleit werde: Door vijf Sinnen even als door sekere veinsters gebreken is den ingank tot de ziel: niet een kan de hooft-stad oft slot der ziele ingenomen worden, 't zy dan dat het vyandelijke heirleger door de poorten van dien inbreke . . ." Lindeborn, 252.

72 ". . . misbruyckinge der andere sinnen met haer, klimt de dood op door de vensteren/ om uwe ziele te vernielen; terstondt soo treckt uwe gesicht en sinnen . . ." Schoenius, 98.

73 ". . . verheft ook u aensicht tot iemand niet als alleen tot uwen God." Lindeborn, 253.

74 ". . . hebt Godt altijdt voor ooghen/ die alleen verdiendt ghepresen/ gheacht bemindt te zijn: en ghy en sult naer d'ooghen der menschen niet veel vraghen." Gerardi, 256.

you are . . . that no one take away the walls of your honor . . ."[75] He thus instructed virgins to close their senses to all but God so that their honor would remain intact, so that no one could sully their purity. The priests believed that Spiritual Virgins had a special responsibility to keep from being penetrated by evil, whether during sexual attack or temptation.

It was also possible to detect internal impurity because of the close connection between a person's interior and exterior. One priest wrote that according to Saint Augustine, "An unchaste eye is a sign of an unchaste heart" and "impurity in a woman shall be known in the raising of her eyes . . ."[76] One way a woman manifested internal sinfulness was by looking around and at others. Musius provided a list of other external signs of internal impurity:

> She is not a Virgin who would rather be on the street, Than praying or reading, Who is afraid of Churches, And would rather dance or talk . . . She is no Virgin, who can be commonly found wandering the streets, Or who puts herself on display daily, By binging without moderation. She is no Virgin, who does not listen to the reason of her Confessor and who does not serve God in peace, But who deafens herself with sin.[77]

Musius explained that a virgin who misbehaved by being out of her home, dancing or talking, displaying herself and sinning was showing outward signs of inward corruption. Subsequent rape hardly mattered when virgin intentions were absent. Following this logic, when a woman's eyes were not on God, her body was no longer pure. Rape was impossible, or at least irrelevant, when a young woman sullied her own body with impure thoughts and behavior. Musius believed that such a virgin actually demonstrated desire for sex as evinced by her attitude and actions. Lumnius agreed with this:

> The sincere virginity of the heart is not only lost and violated by the realization of lust, but also by thoughts, an evil intention, and through wallowing in excess, and through immodesty, that is carried out in splendor or shown

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[75] "Een geslooten hof O dochter bent gy (dus luid de stem van S. Ambroos) dat niemand den heining van uw eerbaerheit weg neme." Gerardi, 72.

[76] ". . . Hier van seyt sint Augustijn: Een oncuysche ooge/ is een bode van een oncuysch hert . . . Want/ seyt de wijse man (Eccli 26)/ die oncuyscheyt eender vrouwen zal ghekent worden in t'verheffen der oogen." *Een Regel Waar Duer*, 14.

[77] "'t Is geen Maagd, die bid of leest, Maar liever was op straat, Die voor Kerken is bevreest, En liever danst, of praat . . . 't Is geen Maagd, die is gewoon/ Te swieren langs de straet, Of sig daaglijks stelt ten toon Door slempen sonder maat. 't Is geen Maagd, die na reden/ En Biegt-Vader niet en hoort/ Die God niet dient met vrede, Maar sig in sonde smoort." Musius, 11.

> through frivolous behavior. When such light, inconstant, carnival dolls hobble about hung with all sorts of lust nets, [they may] appear very honorable [but] found and seen on all the streets, who could ever believe that these are unwilling virgins? Therefore, whoever does not respect the internal honor of the heart deserves to be in danger of losing their external purity.[78]

By walking the streets and dressing luxuriously a woman demonstrated internal corruption. Musius contended that anyone could assume that such a woman wanted a man—in fact, her actions demonstrated that she was available to any man. Musius' and Lumnius' claim that a woman forfeited her physical virginity through internal corruption was more extreme than those of other priests who encouraged the Spiritual Virgins by explaining that virginity was both a physical and mental state that required constant vigilance.

Maintaining Purity

Priests provided the Spiritual Virgins with a great deal of additional advice on how to maintain sexual purity. Priests told them to call out, run away, mutilate and cover themselves to protect men from their beauty, limit what they see, avoid men altogether, stay at home, and even contemplate committing suicide if threatened by sexual attack. As we examine these pieces of advice in turn, we will see that each of these injunctions demonstrates the priests' failure to distinguish between force and temptation, women's responsibility for preventing all types of sexual temptation and attack, and tensions between the limitations these responsibilities placed on Spiritual Virgins and the power it granted them.

When the priests advised Spiritual Virgins to call out for help to preserve their purity, they most often used the example of Saint Bernard, who was not threatened with being overpowered as in our conception of rape. A matron in whose house he was a guest, however, threatened his purity by overpowering him through temptation. She "impurely loved"

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[78] "... den oprechten maeghdom des herten en wort niet alleen verloren ende ghevioleert/ door het wtwercken der welllusten/ maer oock door ghepeysen/ door een quaet voornemen/ ende door andere brootdronchkenschap/ oft ongheschietheyt/ die ghedaen wort in cieraet/ oft in wulpse manieren ghetoont wort. Wanneer dan dat alsulcke lichte wispeltuyten/ ende kermispoppen tontomme met alderley lustnetten behanghen zijnde die deerbaerheyt veyl schijnen te draghen/ ouer alle straten worden ghesien ende gheuonden/ wie soude ander van hen connen gelooven/ dan dat sy onwilligh maechden zijn? Daeromme wie dinwendighe eerbaerheyt des herten niet en achten/ zijn weert in het perijkel te comen/ van dwtwendighe suyuerheyt te verliesen." Lumnius, 241.

him, so she came to his room three times during the night seeking him to be unchaste. But Bernard summoned members of the sleeping household by yelling "murderers, murderers." When they all came to pursue the murderers, "the woman became ashamed and he was left with his purity."[79] Bernard called out because he was afraid that he would be overpowered by temptation. He feared that he could control neither the matron, nor himself.

The second example of how Spiritual Virgins should cry out to preserve their sexual purity is more straightforward. Rosweydus, who made Ribadineira's martyrology available to the Dutch, recounted the story of thirteenth-century Iuetta from the land of Luyck (in modern Belgium), a widow who had been forced into an unwanted first marriage. As she fought to avoid a second marriage, she was forced to stay at a friend's house "against her will," where a young man who was in love with her was also staying. The young man secretly got up in the night:

> . . . to rape her or to have her concede to being unchaste . . . She could not flee, nor could she resist him (as [he was] stronger); she did not dare to call out fearing the disgrace that would befall herself as well as him; she was extremely afraid; she sighed heavily . . . [80]

It is noteworthy that Iuetta did not call out due to a fear that she would be disgraced. Instead of calling out, she began to think of and pray to the Virgin Mary, who then appeared to save her. Mary made a noise as Iuetta saw her on the stairway, which scared the young man back to bed. According to the biographers, Mary's intercession on Iuetta's behalf saved her from both rape and the possibility that she might have given in to the temptation that the situation provided. Regardless of the differing levels of force that Bernard's matron and Iuetta's young man might have intended to

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[79] ". . . dese wierdt van de Matroone/ daer hy te gaste was/ onsuyverlijck bemint/ en tot onkuysheydt versocht: sy quam tot driemael toe 's nachts in sijn kamer/ om hem daer toe te brengen; maer hy riep elcke reyse met luyder stemme: moordenaers/ moordenaers/ maeckende het gantsche Huys-gesin wacker/ dat daer quam geloopen om de moordenaers te vervolgen; waer voor de vrouwe beschaemt en hy in sijne Suyverheydt is gelaten. Roept luydt/ en tiert: stelt het huys en buurte in oproer. Roept moordt/ brandt/ dieven/ moordenaers/ help/ Etc." Schoenius, 95. See also Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 196.

[80] "In de staadt Hoey/ in het landt van Luyck gheleghen" "teghen haren danck moest blijven slapen . . . den jonghelingh stont des nachts heymelijck op/ meynende haer te verkrachten/ oft tot onkuysheydt te verwillighen. Sy en wiste wat doen/ sy en knode niet vlieden/ noch hem (als stercker zijnde) niet wederstaen; sy en dorste niet roepen/ vreesende de schande/ die soo wel haer als hem soude overkomen; sy was seer benauwt; sy versuchtede swaerlijcken: ende beval haer seer aendachtelijcken aen de glorieuse Maghet Maria . . ." Ribadineira and Rosweydus, I, 141.

use, both Bernard and Iuetta feared the loss of their sexual purity. They both contemplated calling out for help (although Iuetta did not have to in the end) to avoid a situation in which they might have been tempted beyond their ability to withstand.

By examining the advice to run away, we again see that the threat to a virgin's purity was just as much temptation as it was physical attack. Just as in the advice to call out when threatened with impurity, a number of priests used male role models to teach Spiritual Virgins to run away. In fact, the most oft-repeated example of a chaste virgin fleeing unwanted sexual advances was Joseph fleeing Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39. Bisschop, for instance, admonished Spiritual Virgins to act as Joseph did:

> . . . hurry away, cut off the sentence you have started, turn your back on your tempter, run quickly, flee with all speed; just as the young man Joseph did; in this danger he ran from his lady's room, leaving her with his cloak and thereby preserved his Purity.[81]

As in the story of Bernard and the matron, it appears that Joseph escaped from a frightening physical attack. Potiphar's wife may not have succeeded in overcoming Joseph with brute physical strength, but Bisschop suggested that Joseph was in real danger of being overcome by sexual temptation. Steur similarly wrote:

> Therefore, O Maiden, flee sin and all the causes of sin, through which the temptation and agitation of the flesh is more surely won by fleeing than by fighting back. Joseph escaped by his flight from the hands of Potiphar's wife, who worked to stir up his sensuality.[82]

The tie between the physical threat and internal desire is even tighter here. Despite Joseph's unwillingness to lose his physical purity to Potiphar's wife, the fear was that his flesh might have begun to desire her advances. He ran in order to escape his own sensuality, which she had incited.

Schoenius also employed Joseph's example. Addressing the Spiritual Virgins, he wrote:

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[81] ". . . hast u/ snijt af het begonst woort/ keert uwen tenteerder den rugghe/ loopt te poste/ vlieght door met aller snelheyt; soo heeft gedaen dien suyveren jonghman Iofeph; in dit perijckel heeft hy met het laten af-nemen van sijnen mantel/ uyt de kamer van sijne vrouwe gheloopen/ ende heeft de Suyverheydt bewaert." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 197–8.

[82] "Daerom o maget vliedt die sonde/ ende alle oorsaeken der sonden: voorwaer die tentatie ende beroerlickhyt des vleesch wordt sekerder ende beter door 'tvlieden verwonnen/ dan door tegen-strijden. Iofeph is deur die vluchte ontcomen wt die handen van Putifhars huys-vrouwe, die hem arbeyden tot wellusten te beroeren." Steur, 221.

> If someone comes seeking to tempt you or to steal your Purity, shun him, if he comes upon you in surprise, break off from what you were planning to do. Do not question or answer him. Close your door and your windows, and let him stand there. Leave that place; run away if he comes: because all your welfare is dependent on your flight . . . Imitate the pure Joseph, who ran out of the room of his lady, leaving his cloak behind, to preserve his Purity.[83]

Again, those wanting to remain pure should avoid situations that might lead them to temptation and sexual sin. The sudden shift from a male attacker to a female one demonstrated that Schoenius, like Bisschop and Steur, did not draw a sharp distinction between forced sex and what we may call seduction. The danger for both religious men and women was that they might give into the temptations provided by either physical attack or seduction. The implicit advice these priests offered women by using the example of Joseph and Potiphar's wife was that their bodies had the dangerous capacity to sexually overpower men.

Priests also advised Spiritual Virgins to avoid looking at other people so they would suffer less temptation. Occasionally the clerics proscribed a general rule. The author of the *Instructions for the Spiritual Daughters*, for example, explained that the absence of tempting sights allowed a woman to maintain purity because ". . . so long as the eye does not see, the heart is in peace." He also explained that it "is impossible to drive impure thoughts out of the mind so long as the impure sight of a person of the opposite sex remains."[84] More interesting perhaps are Bisschop's examples of men who, despite their great strength, had to control their eyes, and the fact that he included these examples in the advice he wrote for Spiritual Virgins. Alexander the Great, for example, did not even want to see the wives or daughters of his defeated enemies in order to avoid temptation. King Cyrus of Persia avoided the sight of his beautiful captive Panthea to protect himself. Charles V, "the always victorious glory of our Netherlands [who] did not fear any enemy more than his eyes," closed his

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[83] ". . . soeckt u iemandt te tenteren ofte van uwe Suyverheydt te beroove/ schuwet die/ komt die u overvallen/ breeckt af uw propoost. Wilt hem noch vragen noch antwoorden. Sluyt uwe deure en vensters dicht/ en laet hem staen. Treckt van daer; loopt weg als hy komt: want al uwe welvaren is hier in 't vluchten gelegen . . . Volgt de suyvere Joseph na/ die uyt de kamer van sijn vrouwe liep/ achterlatende sijnen mantel/ om sijn Suyverheydt te bewaren." Schoenius, 94.

[84] "Zo lang als d'ooge niet en ziet, is het hert in vrede . . . daerom is 't onmogelyk d'onzuyvere gedaenten uyt het verstandt te dryven, zoo lang als d'onzuyvere aenschouwinge van een ongelyk persoon niet en wort weg-genomen." *Onderwijzingen voor de geestelyke dochters, behelzende de voordeelen, de plicht en oeffeningen van haren staet, met eene voor-afgaende verdeelinge van__oeffeningen door den dag en door het jaer*, (Gent. s.d. (Ieper): Mauritius van der Ween, 1709), 59–60.

"window if any beautiful woman should pass by, because he did not want to be taken prisoner."[85] Even Job who was "... like a marble column to all temptations" guarded his eyes against women, saying "I made a covenant with my eyes, not to look lustily at a girl."[86] Steur agreed, adding that King David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband as the result of "an improper sight."[87]

Following this list of powerful men who had limited their opportunities to see certain women, Bisschop explained why he employed these examples of men to teach women how to behave:

> ... if even these great men who were the fear of nations and ruled the world ... protected their eyes [so much more so should] ... the virgin who is weak and tender ... and likely to fall if she does not observe this. Therefore Saint Clara, who never looked a man in the face should be praised here ... Follow these examples, virgin, and protect your eyes.[88]

Women's greater inability to withstand temptation meant that they had even more reason to avoid the sight of men. Fransicus de Smidt, the translator of the Life of Virgin Aloysia De Caravaial Y Mendoca, provided Spiritual Virgins with a very strict example to follow. He wrote that Aloysia "maintained an angelic purity ... and was very careful to never look at a

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[85] "Carolus den Vijfden/ de glorie van ons Nederlandt altijdt overwinnelijc/ heeft oock geenen meerderen vyandt ghevreest dan sijne ooghen/ die hy niet en betrouwde; waerom hy seer dickwils de venster toe-sloot/ als daer eenighe schoone vrouwen souden voor by passeren/ op dat hy niet en sonde ghevanghen worden." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 212.

[86] "Alexander den Grooten/ naer ontallrijcke victorien/ ende het verwinnen van Darius en heeft niet willen eens aensien de huysvrou ende de dochters van sijnen vyant .... Cyrus den Koningh en heeft noyt willen Panthea aensien/ ... Job selve/ die teghen alle tentatien was als eene Marmer Colomne ... heeft dit nochtans gedaen/ dat hy een verbondt heeft gemaeckt met sijne ooghen/ o dat hy niet en soude peysen van eene Maghet." See also *Een Regel Waar Duer*, 13. This story is taken from Job 31. Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 212.

[87] "... alst wel in David heeft ghebleken/ die door een onbehoorlijck gesichte in overspel, ende in doodt-slach is ghevallen ...." Story found in 2 Samuel 11. Steur, 236 (misnumbered 326).

[88] "Doen dit die groote mannen/ die de vreese waren der natien/ die de wereldt gouverneerden ende deden beven/ hebben sy segghe ick soo hunne ooghen bewaert/ soo voor die besorght gheweest/ veel meer moet doen de Maghe die alesins kranck is ende teerder/ swack ende genegen tot vallen/ als sy haer niet en wilt gade slaen. Daerom wel magh hier gepresen worden de H. Clara a Monte falco, die noyt man in 't aensicht ghesien en heeft ... Ghy dan Maghet/ sult uwe ooghen bewaren/ ende dese exempelen na-volghen." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 213.

human face, not even her housemates."[89] This advice both warned Spiritual Virgins to avoid their own temptation and suggested that women were the source of men's sexual sin.

For women, rape was the consequence of their failure to control their eyes. According to Bisschop:

> What happened to Dinah, the daughter of Jacob? She used her eyes frivolously. She curiously wanted to see others and alas she was also seen. An impure young man took her honor and so she learned and taught the world through her accident how dangerous it is not to keep your eyes at home.[90]

Just as in Cats' account of this story discussed in chapter three, Dinah was responsible for her rape because she had not controlled her curious eyes. Both Cats and Bisschop used her example to teach young women that it was their responsibility to avoid rape. Schoenius and Bisschop provided another example. When an unnamed holy virgin found out that her eyes had seduced a young man, "... she gouged them out with a sword ..." In so doing, she saved the young man, who became a much-respected monk.[91] This unnamed woman was exemplary because she took responsibility over her eyes before any harm could come to her or to the young man. She thereby avoided tempting him and saved them both. Not only were individual men tempted by the straying eyes of women, according to *The Instructions for the Spiritual Daughters*, all sin entered the world because of a woman's eyes. "Eve fell into sin because of the curious use of her eyes."[92] The imperfection of the entire world could have been avoided had Eve controlled her eyes.

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[89] "... een enghelsche Suyverheyt bewaert ... ende dit met sulcken voorsichticheydt/ datse noyt eenen men schint aensicht oock niet haere huysghenoten en besagh." Ludovicus Munnos, *Het Stichtbaer leven van de Doorluchtighe ende Weerdighe Maget Dona Aloysia De Caravaial Y Mendoca: Spiegel der sielen welcke in Suyverheyt in de werelt leven. In het spaensch, door den Licentiaet Lvdovicvs Mvnnos beschreven, Ende in Duyts door R.P. Fransicsvs de Smidt der Societeyt IESV ghestelt.* (Antwerp: Cornelis Woons, 1649), 49–50.

[90] "Wat is gebeurt aen Dina de dochter van Jacob? Sy heeft willen hare oogen lichteveerdelijc bebruycken/ sy wilde nieus-gierichlijck andere sien/ ende eylaes/ sy is oock gesien gheweest: hare eere heeft eenen onsuyveren jonckman genomen/ ende soo heeft sy geleert met haer ongheluch haer selven ende de werelt/ hoe vol perijckel dat is sijne ooghen niet t'huys te houden ..." Story from Genesis 34. Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 211.

[91] "Een andere Maget verstaende dat een jongeling door haer oogen bekoort wiierde/ en daerom haer moeyelijck viel/ heeft met een sweert die selfde uytgesteecken; waer door de jongeling beweegt zijnde van herten/ is na Schiti gegaen/ en een treffelijcke Monick geworden." Schoenius, 93.

[92] "Eva door het kurieus gebruyk der oogen in zonden gevallen zyn." *Onderwijzingen voor de geestelyke dochters ...*, 59.

For religious men, the consequences of failure were not so great. Bisschop's example of a religious man who had not adequately controlled his eyes allows us to compare Saint Bernard and Dinah:

> Saint Bernard, an extremely pure human, did not adequately protect his eyes one time: he looked intensely into a woman's face, but coming to himself, he punished this by jumping into a lake and stayed there a long time, until he was almost frozen by the bitter cold water and had extinguished the fire of impurity. The face is too precarious. It is a thief of the soul and of Purity.[93]

Like Dinah, it was Bernard's responsibility to control his eyes and therefore avoid temptation, but unlike Dinah, he was not attacked for simply looking about. As in the other cases of men facing external threats to their purity, such as Joseph when confronted by Potiphar's wife, religious men demonstrated the importance of running away, calling out, or simply not looking at others. However, these religious men were able to rectify the situation by, for example, jumping into a pool of ice-cold water, or sticking a hand into a flame. Dinah was unable to remedy her "misfortune". While men were responsible for stifling their own temptation, there were no permanent consequences of physical sexual sin. Women, on the other hand, were responsible for both their own temptation, and that of others, and for the permanent physical and spiritual impact of failure.

Since they deemed women fundamentally responsible for sexual sin, priests provided the Spiritual Virgins with long lists of activities to help them make themselves less dangerous for men. Priests advised them to cover their bodies and faces, limit what they saw, and protect men from seeing them, make themselves less physically attractive, avoid men, not touch anyone, and stay home as much as possible. The reason women had to work so hard to protect men was because of the power their bodies exuded. Lumnius, for instance, revealed the way in which women's bodies could completely control men:

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[93] "Den H. Barnardus eenen uytermaten suyveren mensch/ als hy noch Jonghelingh was/ heeft eens sijne ooghen qualijck bewaert: hy sagh eene vrouwe aen sterckelijck in 't aensicht/ maer tot sijn selven komende/ heeft dit ghestraft met te springhen in eenen poel/ ende daer langen tijt in te staen/ tot dat hy door de bitter koude van het water nu by na vervrosen hadde/ al het vyer des onkuyscheyts in 't herte uyt-gheblust. 'T gesicht is te perikuleus/ het is eenen bespieder vande ziele ende de Suyverheyt." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 212.

> . . . a woman, in her entire physical being is so saturated, that she can draw a man to her from far away just like a magnet draws iron, not only when she speaks or looks about, but also [simply when she is] sitting or going somewhere. This is because her body has within itself an amazing power against men by which she attracts his body (without meaning to I almost added from him) to do with as she wants.[94]

This quote repositioned the woman as the one who drew the man to her through her power and was therefore responsible for the sexual temptation of men. Schoenius also made this point: "from the woman stems the wickedness of men and from the man comes the impurity of Virgins."[95] These statements that women are the source of sexual temptation form the basis of the idea that men simply could not help themselves when they raped women.

To ensure that Spiritual Virgins did not entice men into a love-crazed state or tempt themselves, the priests counseled them to dress in a particular way. Lumnius wrote that a Spiritual Virgin should: ". . . cover herself with much care and vigilance and cover all sides, so that she will not only remain inviolate and unstained, but also so that all those who see her will not be injured by her face."[96] Lumnius' thus exhorted women to use clothing to cover their bodies and their faces in order to save men from impurity. Thomas Philippus wrote that a maiden "should have a head covering with which to properly cover her face when she leaves her house."[97] Firstly, this was so that they "not become pleased with [their] clothing and thereby forget" the attention they had to render to God's temple and secondly, so that they would not become "stumbling blocks for their

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[94] "Want eene vrouwe/ in het geheel wesen haers lichaems/ also gesaetsoeneert is/ dat sy niet alleen sprekende ende siende/ maer ooc stil sittende oft gaende/ van verre tot haer kan trecken den man/ gelijc een magnet-steen tot hem treckt het yser. Want haer lichaem in hem heeft een wonderlijcke krachte tegen den man/ waer door sy sijn lichaem treckt (sonder wetentheyt hadde ick benaest geseyt van hem) tot haeren believen. Tot noch toe Basilius." Lumnius, 225.

[95] ". . . van de Vrouwe [komt] de boosheydt des Mans, en van de Man de onsuyverheydt des Magets." Schoenius, 104.

[96] ". . . maer sy sal haer met alle sorchvuldichheyt ende toesicht/ aen alle canten bedecken: op dat sy niet alleen ongeschent ende onbevleckt en blijue/ maer oock/ op dat die gene/ die haer besien/ uyt haer gesichte gheen letsel en nemen." Lumnius, 235.

[97] "Als sy buyten huys moeten gaen, sullen sy eene saye faillie op het hooft hebben ende daer mede hun aensight taemelyck decken." Thomas Philippus, *Den Godvruchtigen Regel van de Geestelyke Dochters der Vergaederinge van de Onbevlekte Ontfangenisse van de Alderh. Maghet ende Moeder Godts Maria genoemt Apostelinne Eerst opgestelt in het Jaer 1680 door de seer Eerw. Ende Godt-minnende Geestelyke Dochter Agnes Baliques* (Mechelen: Laurentius vander Elst, 1724), 18.

neighbors."[98] Yet again, we see that women were responsible for covering themselves to decrease the risk of others encountering temptation. Bisschop agreed with Saint Jerome that a woman's face was dangerous for others: a virgin was like the Ark of the Covenant, because like virgins, the Ark "... must be covered when it is carried from a place, because anyone who sees it bare will be lost. So also should you be covered, so that no one shall receive disgrace by seeing your face." The face of a maiden, with no ill intentions, could cause others to fall. Bisschop again admonished spiritual women to protect others from being tempted by the sight of them: "Still others say the Virgin is a hidden treasure; if someone was to carry this about openly and uncovered, I think that he would like to be robbed by scoundrels on the road."[99] Purity was a valuable asset to be hidden by clothing because good people would be tempted by it and men could not help but want to take it.

Plates 17 and 18 illustrate the priests' message for the Spiritual Virgins. In each image these women are situated just under heaven and depicted as safe and out in the world. However, this requires many layers of protection, including the clothing, which completely envelops them and their isolation from all other humans.

Each of these title pages adds another protective element. Schoenius' title page includes a barrier of trees that protects the virgins from the evil of the world and Bisschop's title page features armed angels, who ensure that dangerous, worldly people, including a prostitute and a drunk on the bottom left and prosperous people on the bottom right, cower in hell. These trees and angels guarantee that the Spiritual Virgins, although outside, are protected from dangerous forces. As in these images, Catholic priests empowered these religious women to save their people through meaningful activity, but only if they kept their bodies from hurting themselves and others by keeping themselves carefully covered.

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[98] "1. Op dat sy niet en souden bekommen wesen in hun kleedtsel, waer door sy lichtelyk souden vergeten de schuldige aendagtigheyt, die se aen Godt verschynende is den tempel moeten bewysen. 2. Op dat sy hun selven hier door souden bevryden van stronkelsteenen te wesen aen hunnen even-naesten ..." Philippus, 226.

[99] "... Arcke des Ouden Testaments: dese/ soo wy weten/ als sy van eenighe plaetse verdraghen wierdt/ moest gheduerigh ghedeckt zijn/ op dat niemandt die bloot siende/ soude hebben verloren gegaen: soo oock dan/ behoort ghy gedeckt te aijn/ op dat niemant in u aensicht schandael en soude ontfangen.Wederom de Maghet/ segghen andere/ is eenen verborghen schat; nu dan wilt iemant desen gaen bloot dragen ende onghedeckt/ my dunckt dat hy over den wegh van alle rabaut wilt berooft wesen." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 4.

Plate 17. Front page of Wilhelm Schoenius, *The Way of Purity of the Virgins of Holland* (Antwerpen: voor Philippus van Eyck [Amsterdam] 1676). Leiden University Library, 737 E 1.

Plate 18. Front page of Valentinius Bisschop, *The Praise of Purity* (Antwerpen: Hieronymus Vedussen 1626). Leiden University Library, 1156 G 29.

If a Spiritual Virgin was unable to prevent herself from tempting a man by covering her body, priests advised her to make herself less attractive, even possibly to disfigure herself. In Rosweydus's hagiographical volumes, Idelberga wanted to protect her daughter Gertrudis, who had taken a vow of chastity, from a beautiful, young prince who had been "infected with love" for her. Idelberga was "greatly afraid" that "through the inspiration of devils," he and his soldiers would "abduct her violently and marry her [daughter] against her will." To prevent this, Idelberga "took up her scissors . . . and cut her [daughter's] hair, which was beautiful and long." The "ugliness of [Gertrudis'] shaven head" "deprived her of her beauty" and immediately ended the prince's lust for her. "The holy mother had scarcely cut the hair from her daughter's head before the tempest was immediately stilled."[100] Rosweydus also mentioned Itisberga, daughter of Pipin, who was able to avoid the advances of a prince of Portugal because she was disfigured by leprosy.[101]

These stories also include two saints who prayed for ugliness. Both Saint Brigitta, and Saint Lidwina of Schiedam who lived in the province of Holland in the fifteenth century, wanted to be made ugly so that no one would seek to marry them. God granted this to both of them: one of Brigitta's eyes temporarily "runs out of her like water," but God restored it after she took up residence in a cloister because he did not want "the one who was willing to lose her beauty to save her purity, to remain ugly."[102] God granted Lidwina many "pains and accidents" which dissuaded anyone from marrying her, starting with breaking her rib in an accident on a frozen canal and continuing with innumerous other illnesses.[103] Destroying and praying for the loss of their beauty were ways priests counseled religious women to maintain their vows of chastity when pressured to marry physically, financially, and socially attractive men. Gertrudis', Brigitta's,

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100 ". . . onsteken met hare liefde . . . door 't ingeven des duyvels haer die met gewelt souden ontvoeren/ ende teghen haren danck trouwen . . . Hierom nam sy . . . de schare inde handt/ ende sonder langhe te vertoeven/ sneedt haer 't hayr af/ t'welck sy seer schoon ende langh hadde . . . d'eenin ontsagh haer niet 't cieraet van een sulcke schoonheyt te benemen: . . . de leelijckheydt van haer gheschoren hooft . . . De heylighe moeder en hadde nauwelijcks 't hayr van haer dochters hooft af-ghesneden/ oft dit tempeest wiert terstont ghestilt." Ribadineira and Rosweydus, 371.

101 Ribadineira and Rosweydus, 573.

102 ". . . een van haer ooghen verstede en liep uyt gelijk water . . . Want onsen Heere en wilde niet ghedooghen/ dat de ghene/ die om niet te verliesen hare reynigheydt/ hadde willen verliesen de schoonheyt des lichaems/ leelijck soude blijven." Ribadineira and Rosweydus, 247.

103 Ribadineira and Rosweydus, 461.

Lidwina's, and Itisberga's sudden lack of attractiveness released the men threatening to marry these women against their will from their love-crazed states. The priests agreed that women were responsible to end their beauty because they could not otherwise control its power over men.

Catholic priests suggested a more personally active approach in other cases. They suggested that the Spiritual Virgins follow the example of early medieval nuns who had mutilated themselves to extinguish the passions of their would-be rapists, thereby escaping impurity.[104] Both Bisschop and Schoenius related the story of Saint Ebba Abbatissa and her sisters of the cloister of Collingam who mutilated their faces. The saint, terrified as the Danes fell upon Scotland because these attackers were known to violate virgins, "... takes a knife and cuts off her nose and top lip down to her teeth" and encourages her fellow nuns to do the same."[105] Schoenius continued the story by telling us "the Danes do not touch them because of how ghastly they look" but instead burn down the entire cloister, leaving them pure and making them martyrs.[106] Both Ebba Abbatissa and her sisters viciously mutilated themselves to avoid rape. That these women went to this extreme indicates that the nuns were fearful that they might otherwise "share the guilt as willing accomplices in the loss of their virginity."[107] By employing these hagiographic examples, priests implied that the Spiritual Virgins had the power to save themselves so long as they were willing to disfigure themselves.

Male saints also engaged in self-destructive actions to avoid impurity. Schoenius provided the example of a hermit who kept the death cloak of a woman who once tempted him to remind himself of the "foulness and puss of the dead body."[108] Another religious man stuck his hand in a flame until he burned off his fingers so that he could have a foretaste of hell. Yet another is Dominic, who lay naked upon a bed of hot coals after a loose woman tempted him.[109] While Brigitta, Lidwina, Ebba Abbatissa and her nuns took action to make themselves unattractive to men and thereby

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104 Schulenburg, 29–72.

105 "... neemt sy een mes/ ende snijt haer af den neuse met de bovenste lippe tot de tanden toe." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 189.

106 "... de Denen ... aensiende hoe afgrijsselijck die persoonen in 't aenschijn waeren gestelt/ en hebben haer niet aengeraeckt; maer haer allegader met haer klooster verbrandt." Schoenius, 93.

107 Schulenburg, 60.

108 "... de vuyligheydt en etter van het doode lichaem." Schoenius, 92.

109 Schoenius, 92–93.

avoid physical attack, the men in these stories did things to make physical temptation less attractive to themselves.

Many priests provided examples of the ultimate self-destructive means of preventing rape, namely suicide. For example, the author of *A Rule through which like a Mirror Christian Virgins . . . May Come to True Internal Beauty* told his readers that:

> [Many] holy Virgins . . . preferred to spill their blood, to suffer various tortures, and to die a hard, cruel death rather than consent to the violation of their purity which they had offered to Christ: such as Agatha, Lucia, Agnes, Cecilia, and . . . others.[110]

Schoenius advised the Spiritual Virgins to emulate the virgin martyrs' example:

> Prefer to die as a martyr for Purity rather than give consent to be robbed of it . . . Although according to the Catholic Fathers, that if a Virgin does her best . . . with yelling, flailing about with her body, and consenting in no way to such or being made willing, but hindering it insofar as she can, and being of a constant will to not consent, then she does not commit a mortal sin if she is dishonored . . . nevertheless this is sorrowful and dangerous. To not give consent to sin of fleshly lusts at such a time is like being in a fire and not burning. O Pure Bride of Christ! Prefer to die for the Purity as all the Holy Virgins and Martyrs. Think that there is no more glorious death as dying for Purity.[111]

Once again, it is evident that it was not necessarily rape itself that was feared. As we have seen, a virgin could theoretically be raped and still retain her virginity. However, many priests believed that forced sex would most likely become consensual. Schoenius likened the inevitability of consenting during rape to being burned in a fire. In another formulation,

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110 ". . . andere heylighe Maechdekens . . . lieuer gehadt hebben haer bloet te storten/ verscheyden tormenten te lyden ende een harde wreeden doot te sterven/ dan sy wilden haer maechdelijcke reynicheydt Christo opgheoffert met haer consent laten schennen: als zijn Agatha/ Lucia/ Agnes/ Cecilia/ ende meer anderen." *Een Regel Waar Duer*, 30.

111 "Sterft liever Martelaresse voor de Suyverheyt/ eer ghy consent geeft om daer van berooft te worden." ". . . Al is 't gevoelen der Catholijcke Leeraers/ dat een Maget die haer beste doet . . . met reopen/ en haer lichaem te roeren/ en op geender maniere tot sulcken wreck te consenteren/ of bereydt te maecken; maer belettende soo veel als sy kan/ en een vaste wille hebbende van niet te consenteren/ geen doodtsonde doet als sy also wordt onteert . . . nochtans soo is 't droevig en periculeus. Op sulcken tijdt geen consent te geven tot de sonde in de vleesschelijck welusten/ is in't vuer te zijn en niet te branden. O Suyvere Bruydt Christ! Sterft liever voor de Suyverheydt met al de H.H. Maegden en Martelaressen. Denckt dat er geen glorieuser doodt is/ als voor de Suyverheydt te sterven." Schoenius, 95–96.

Schoenius contended that a woman might: "commit adultery by consenting in some sensuality perchance after the fact."[112] The insurmountable obstacle in judging a virgin innocent after rape was the belief that rape provided too great a temptation to overcome and the inability to prove (to herself and others) that a woman had not consented.

Vondel agreed with this assessment in his *Letters of the Holy Virgins*. Like other virgin martyrs faced with rape, Pelagia chose to kill herself. However, in her story it is her family members who encourage her to commit suicide:

> Now daughter! [Her family] said, go, where no violators can force you. We will follow on this path, and choose to jump in a cold stream, rather than to singe that which the nature of women teaches us to preserve in the glowing fire of an angry soldier, or of Caesar's body guard.[113]

Pelagia's female family members argue that death is the only way to prevent the likelihood that they too would burn with lust if raped. Through Pelagia's example, Vondel taught that suicide could keep a virgin from giving in to temptation and thereby allow her to gain martyrdom.

In spite of their repetition of the virgin martyr stories, a number of priests asserted that suicide was not a suitable response to the threat of rape. Most priests explained that it was more useful to admire the early Christian virgin martyrs than to follow their examples. Bisschop wrote that all laws forbid hurting or killing oneself. The virgin martyrs were the only exceptions to these laws because the Holy Spirit very clearly prompted them.[114] Even Schoenius, who explicitly told Spiritual Virgins to prefer death to rape, agreed that only the Holy Spirit could incite a virgin to commit suicide and stressed that these examples existed predominantly to show the great value of virgin purity.[115] Lumnius explained that Pelagia was not an example to be followed because a virgin who tries to kill herself risks the sin of murder. He suggested that it was better to wait to see

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[112] "Laet ons nu eenen dootslach doen/ ons seluen vermoordende/ Op dat sy by auontueren naderhant consenterende in eenighe welluste/ geen ouerspel en doen: En ist niet beter onseker ouerspel te verwachten/ dwelcmen niet en weet oft gheschieden sal/ oft niet: dan nu van stondenaen een dootslach te doen/ die seker is?" Lumnius, 247.

[113] "Nu dochter, zeitze, ga, daer u geen schenders dwingen. Wy volgen op die streeck, en kiezen, eer te springen/ In eenen killen stroom, dan in den gloenden brant/ Van eenigh woest soldaet of Caesars lyftrauwant/ Te zengen, 't geen natuur de vrouwen leert bewaren." Vondel, *Brieven der Heilige Maeghden*, 522.

[114] Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 194.

[115] Schoenius, 94. Also see Schoenius, 95–96.

whether the physical attack would take place: "Is it not better to await an uncertain act of adultery . . . than to commit certain murder now?"[116]

In addition to advising Spiritual Virgins to destroy their beauty, cover their bodies and faces, control what they saw and who saw them, and possibly commit suicide, priests also advised them to avoid men as much as possible. They wanted the Spiritual Virgins to avoid the threat of tempting themselves and others in this way. Bisschop was particularly adamant about this point. He exhorted maidens to avoid the company of men:

> . . . if [a man and a woman] find themselves together often, a wind will rise up, a temptation which shall rush them toward impurity and utter decay. The examples of this are too great and too numerous: rarely will you see anyone travel this sea without shipwreck.[117]

Bisschop believed that men and women could not even speak together for very long without whipping up temptation: "Truly, if a Maiden allows herself to be visited by a man, I do not know how they can avoid impurity."[118] He unequivocally told the Spiritual Virgins that it was their responsibility to avoid rape by avoiding conversations with men:

> Why then was Tamar, the daughter of David, raped by her own brother Amnon when she visited him? The madness of impurity makes no exception for virginity if it can grasp a place in the human heart. Escape from this situation, run away and shun lengthy conversations.[119]

By using Tamar as an example of how Spiritual Virgins should prevent rape, Bisschop implicitly blamed Tamar for visiting too long with her brother. It

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[116] "Laet ons nu eenen dootslach doen/ ons seluen vermoordende/ Op dat sy by auontueren naderhant consenterende in eenighe welluste/ geen ouerspel en doen: En ist niet beter onseker ouerspel te verwachten/ dwelcmen niet en weet oft gheschieden sal/ oft niet: dan nu van stondenaen een dootslach te doen/ die seker is?" Lumnius, 247.

[117] ". . . is 't dat sy dan veel hun vinden by malkanderen/ daer sal eens eenen windt oprijsen/ eene tentatie/ diese sal in onkuyscheydt jaghen/ ende gheheel bederven. De exempelen sijn hier al te groot ende te veel: nauwelijcks een sult ghy sien die desen poel sonder Schip-brake heeft over-ghevaren." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 213–214. See also Schoenius, 104–105.

[118] "Voorwaer is't dat de Maget haer laet dickwils besoecken van eenige mans-persoon/ ick en weet niet hoe sy sal konnen ontgaen de onsuyverheydt." Schoenius, 269.

[119] "Ende waerom dan heeft de Dohter va Davidt Thamar verkracht gheweest van haren eygen broeder Ammon/ als sy hem aleen besochte? De dulligheydt van de onkuysheyt en onderscheyt geene maeghschap/ als sy in't herte van den mensch kan plaetse grijpen. Vliet dier occasie/ loopter wegh af/ wacht u van te groote conversatie." Bisschop, 215–216. This is very different from Calvin's assessment, which did not blame Tamar for her rape. Calvin held Amnon accountable for "cast[ing] an impure eye on his sister Tamar" as well as their father, King David, for "taking such a large number of wives." Calvin, *Sermon on 2 Samuel 13:1–14* (1562). Witte and Kingdon, 340.

is not clear whether the "extreme madness of impurity" "grasp[ed] a place" in her heart or just in her brother's. In any case, Tamar and other maidens were to avoid conversations with men in order to avoid overwhelming the latter with temptation. Other priests employed Tamar's example to teach the Spiritual Virgins that they were not safe with any man, not even their brothers. Kemp, for instance, advised maidens to "never keep excessive company even with male blood relatives" because "the good name of a Maiden and her conscience are in danger."[120] Kemp was more specific than Bisschop in asserting that the woman herself was just as likely to suffer temptation if she conversed with a man.

Spiritual Virgins had to avoid older men as well. Schoenius, for example, quoted a bedridden old man: "Get away from me woman, the fire still burns; take away that straw."[121] In addition, Bisschop provided the example of Jacob the hermit who raped his niece when he was seventy.[122] The priests were adamant that women were not safe around men, even elderly men, and they highlighted women's responsibility for removing themselves from these potentially dangerous situations.

If merely talking to men could have such terrible consequences, it makes sense that the priests told the Spiritual Virgins never to touch a man because, according to Bisschop, "... the body ... is a giant inextinguishable fire which burns just as hell does down to the legs ... [and] down into the soul so that any good and virtue is changed to ash." Addressing the Spiritual Virgins, he explained that when such a man touches you, he "touches your entire soul and your entire body progressing from top to bottom with a stirring of impurity."[123] Bisschop taught that it is the nature of the flesh to burn with impurity and that a virgin's body could be set on fire by a simple touch, which could lead to the impurity of her entire soul. With this conception of human desire, it is easy to see why priests warned the

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120 "Wat d'ongelijcke persoonen aengaet, ghy en moet noyt met die, al waeren 't bloedt verwanten, overgroote gemeensaemheydt houden .... 'want voorwaer den goeden name van een Maeght, en haer conscientie loopen gevaer, als eenen ongelijcken persoon haer dickwils comt begroeten." Kemp, 107.

121 "Gaet van my Vrouwe, het vierken left noch; neemt weg dat strooy." Schoenius, 105–106.

122 "... dat hy oock sijne eyghen nichte heeft misbruyckt." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 217.

123 "Het lichaem des mensch is voor den onghelijcken persoon een groot onblusschelijck vier/ 't welc brant gelijc een helle tot in de beenderen ... van die tot in de ziele toe /daert al het gene goet en deugelijck is in asschen doet verkeeren ... die u geheel ziele raect/ ende t'gheheel lihaem van boven tot beneden beroert tot eenen onsuyveren voortganc." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 278–279.

Spiritual Virgins that they would likely be tempted when raped. It did not seem to matter how much you did not want sex at first, the female body was likely to eventually respond with consent.

Priests were adamant that the fire of lust could be ignited between two spiritual people who had no ill intentions. According to her biographer, Ludovicus Jacobi, Lidwina believed this, which is why she rarely let anyone touch her.[124] The example Bisschop used was Mary of Oignies, a beguine living in the south of the Low Countries from 1177–1213. When conversing with a religious man, his hand had touched hers "out of spiritual affection and with a pure heart, nevertheless he felt the rising of the flesh within him." Mary was meditating on God and so did not notice, but suddenly God made her say 'Do not touch me' in Latin, which she did not understand.[125] The spiritual man understood that God had saved them both without embarrassing him in front of the spiritual woman and left her immediately. It was not that the spiritual man had wanted to feel desire for Mary, but rather that the very nature of their bodies led to sexual temptation. Bisschop advised the Spiritual Virgins to make sure there was space between themselves and men:

> . . . so that also your clothing does not touch . . . Even clothing can rouse impurity because . . . just as flax bursts into flame as it touches the fire, so also do men and women who through a natural heat are drawn to one another if they draw very close to one another they are quickly ignited and set on fire.[126]

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[124] ". . . want sy wist wel dat de schaemte een stercke borst-weiringhe is voor de suyverheydt." Ludovicus Jacobi S.J., *Den Spieghel der Maeghden, Die inde werelt de godvruchtigheyt met de suyverheyt paren uyt-ghebeeldt in twee H.H. Maeghden, te weten de H. Isabella van Vranckrijck [door N. Caussin S.J.] ende de H. Lidwina [door J. Brugman O.F.M.], In welcke de weerdigheydt, vruchtbaerheydt ende eyghendommen vanden gheestelijcken staet inde wereldt bewesen worden, overgheset in onse Neder-duytsche tale door E.P.L.J. Priester der Societeyt Jesu* (Antwerpen: weduwe van Jan Cnobbaert, 1657), 63.

[125] ". . . tot haar quam: een seker geestelijc persoon/ de welcke in t'samen spreken de hant van haer altemet raeckte; dit/ al wast dat hy't dede uyt eene geestelijcke affectie/ ende met een suyver herte/ heeft nochtans gevoelt in hem de sticstlen des vleesch oprijsen: maer Maria was soo diep in haer propoost getreden/ dat sij't niet ghewaer en wiert watter ghebeurde: nochtans Godt willende de Suyverheydt van sin vriendinne bewaren/ heeft een vois laten ouer haerlieden luyden in 't latijn/ Noli me tangere; 'twelck als Maria niet en verstont . . ." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 279–280.

[126] ". . . maer sult een seker spatie laten in 't midden tusschen beyde/ soo dat oock malkanders kleederen niet en worden aengheraeckt . . . . Oock door de kleederen verweckt worden tot het bedrijf van de onkuyscheydt/ want seydt hy/ ghelijck een vlas/ als 't maer het vier en raeckt/ slaet terstont in vlamme/ soo oock man ende vrouwe/ die door de natuerlijcke hitte tot malkanderen getrocken worden/ als sy by malkanderen seer na komen/

Bisschop also instructed women to fear the clothes that touched their bodies because they might incite lust.

The priests told the Spiritual Virgins that the best way to avoid seeing, being seen, being with and possibly touching men, was to stay home. Steur warned them to stay away from births, weddings, banquets, feasts, and plays and to "flee everything that gives pleasure."[127] These events provided too great a risk that the maidens might be tempted to enjoy their flesh. One priest, using an example from early Christian author, Tertullian, elucidated why religious women should avoid the theater in particular:

> . . . a woman who went to the theater came back possessed by a devil. When the evil spirit was conjured up and exorcized, [as to] why he had been so bold as to attack a religious woman, he replied: 'I have acted by my very right because I found her in my domain.'[128]

There were certain places one simply could not go without inviting a devil in or sullying one's purity. Steur and Bisschop also told the Spiritual Virgins to stay off the streets. Steur wrote that they "should watch closely and walk along the streets only in cases of great need."[129] Moreover, Steur added: "Christ is not to be found on the streets or at the market, because Christ is peace. There is strife at the market and on the streets . . . let the foolish maidens walk outside. But keep yourself inside with your Bridegroom."[130] Maidens were not to go out much and it seems that the streets, marketplace, and theater were particularly dangerous. Willibrord Kemp, priest of Saint Gertrudis, who was excommunicated in 1712 because of his Jansenist views, stressed that too many men would be able to see a

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worden haest onsteken/ ende in brande gestelt." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 276–277.

127 ". . . vliedt al dat genuchelijck is . . ." Steur, 224.

128 ". . . een Vrouwe, de welcke tot den Theater was gegaen, ende met eenen Duyvel beseten van daer gekomen. Als dan den boosen geest besworen wirdt ende uytgemaent, waerom hy sigh verstout hadt een geloovige Vrouw aen te vallen: soo seyde hy: Ick hebbe wel ende seer rechtelijck gedaen want ick hebben haer in het mijn gevonden." F.V.O.C.S. van der Weyden, *Het leven van de godtvruchtighe ende deughtsaeme Anna de Torres geestelycke dochter, salighlijck in den Heere overleden binnen Antwerpen op den 13 Januarii 1698. Uyt waere ondervindinghe, ende ghetrouwe overleveringhe, by een vergaedert, ende eenvoudelijck beschreven, ende voor-gestelt aen alle Godtminnende zielen* (Antwerpen: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1710), 58.

129 ". . . Aldus behooren u nauwe te wachten/ ende niet veele sonder grooten noodt lanckx die straeten te wandelen . . ." Steur, 233.

130 "Maer Christus en wordt op straete/ oft op die merct niet bevonden: want Christus is de vrede: op die merct en straete is kijvagie . . . laet die dwase maeghden buyten spaceren. Maer houdt ghy u binnen by uwen Bruydegom." Steur, 231–2.

woman who was out in public.[131] Following his explanation that Shechem raped Dinah because she "walked away from home," he again emphasized the problems of women walking outdoors:

> . . . a Virgin must necessarily be in danger, if she moves about in public, and is seen by many and unknown eyes; if she takes pleasure in the attention of others; and if people demonstrate too much civility and love to her.[132]

As we have seen, according to priestly advice, women demonstrated an inner corruption and availability to men (and demons) simply by being in public places and conversing with people.

Bisschop provided a model of staying indoors for the Spiritual Virgins. He narrated the story of Maria, a religious woman who had gladly stayed in her room. She was "hidden and unknown and never again came into the view of a man." She went to the Temple only on Easter because she seldom walked outdoors. This was a warning to other women to be more "concerned with their humiliation and Purity than with Religion . . ."[133] Bisschop added elsewhere that a Spiritual Virgin's room was like a hospital. "Stay there, [and] your Purity will remain healthy."[134] If a religious woman did not go out then she would avoid temptation and minimize the chance that her purity would be infected. Joanne Baptista Gabriel, a Carmelite trained in Mechelen who lived in the second half of the seventeenth century and wrote five instructional works, two of which he wrote for the Spiritual Virgins, also warned that their room was the best place for them.

> The Virgins who live in cities and converse daily with persons of the opposite sex are in thousands of dangerous situations through which . . . the slightest impure face, discourse, or touch could destroy their tender bloom of purity,

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131 Monteiro, 364.

132 ". . . een Maeght moer noodtsaeckelijck gevaer loopen, als sy haer selven in 't openbaer begevende, van veele en onbekende oogen wort aengesien; als sy vermaeck neemt om dat op haer gewesen wort; en als men haer te veel beleeftheydt en liefde bewyst." Kemp, 99.

133 ". . . verborgen is/ ende onbekent/ die nimmermeer inde ooghen van de mans heeft ghekomen . . . ghelijck sy was/ selden acter strate ende lande te loopen/ 't welc sy ooc als seer wijs wel konde mercken/ dat na den sin van de S. Schrifture was /die schijnt dit luttel uyt loopen de vrouwe te waerschouwen/ want als sy verbindt alle mans-persoone drymael binnen den jare hun te presenteren voor den Tabernakel/ laet vry de vrouwen/ als meer sorghende voor hunne beschaemheydt ende Suyverheyt/ dan voor de Religie . . ." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 265.

134 ". . . ghy weet wel dat alsoo langhe als ghy hier inde werelt left/ zijt siecker-tierlijck/ on-vastich in de deught ende wanckelbaer . . . Uwe kamer is u voor een sieckhuys/ bewaert dit wel/ wilt ghy in de Suyverheydt gesondt blyven . . ." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 265.

> which is not endangered outside in forests, deserts, on mountains, in valleys, and in all lonely places separated from the world, such as the cloisters and your room.[135]

Because of their responsibility for their own purity and the temptation of others, Gabriel and the other authors of these didactic works told single Catholic women that living in busy cities where they could talk to many men was too dangerous because of the many ways they could lose their purity. Since it was so difficult in such a setting to keep one's face covered, to not converse with or to touch others, the priests advised women to stay in their homes to avoid temptation.

Bisschop and another priest added some even more disempowering admonitions for why the Spiritual Virgins should remain home. Bisschop was against pilgrimages for virgins. He wrote that young women undertook pilgrimages only out of curiosity and that they might "encounter many thieves of their Purity." He told them, "A woman needs either a man or a square wall" and that "a virgin may visit a church or two to receive the holy sacraments and to hear a sermon and to do devotions. But thereafter, she should be satisfied and love the stillness of her room."[136] Bisschop's advice covered the possibility that it would not be followed fully. He exhorted women to never go outside, but then told them that if they had to go outside, never to go at night, but then again if they had to go out at night, to take a lantern. He believed women should stay inside and that that was the only way to ensure that one did not provoke a sexual attack, but recognized that the Dutch Spiritual Virgins would have to make exceptions.

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[135] "Die Maegdekens de welcke in de steden woonen, en all daghen in conversatie sijn van ongelijcke persoonen sijn in duysent perickelen vandoor . . . de minste onkuysch ghesicht, discours, ofte aenraeckinghe te verliesen de teere bloem van de suyverheyt welcke bloem gheen perijckel en heeft buyten in bosschen, in woestijnen, op bergen, in valleyen, ende in alle eensaeme plaetsen, afgescheyden van het ghewoel van de wereldt, als sijn de Cloosters en u vertreck kamer." Gabriel a S. Joanne Baptista O. Carm., *Het gheestelyck houwelyck tusschen Christum en de siele onder den name van Amadea. Aen de getrouwde oft near het Vleesch oft near den Gheest hunne verbintenisse, En aen de ongetrouwde de Oeffeninghe van verscheyden deugden voorhoudende* (Antwerpen: Augustinus Graet, 1691), 300.

[136] ". . . veel roovers van hunne Suyverheydt al-om over den wegh vinden. Waerom ooc 't gemeyn spreeck woort heeft/ Mulieri aut murus aut maritus. Eene vrouwe is noodigh eenen man/ oft eenen vierkanten muer . . . Mijnen raedt dan navolghens dese H. Vaders is/ dat de Maghet eene kercke oft twee besoecke om daer de H. Sacramenten te ontfanghen/ sermoon te hooren/ ende de devotie te doen. Voorts/ dat sy hier mede haer te vreden houde/ ende de stilligheyt haerder kamer beminne." Bisschop, *Den Lof der Suyverheydt*, II, 263–264.

The author of *A Rule through which like a Mirror Christian Virgins . . . May come to True Internal Beauty* made similarly disempowering claims that women had to stay home. He used the example of Dinah to show that women had to stay home to prevent rape.

> She went out to see the women of the land where she had gone with her father. And when she saw Shechem, the son of Hemor Heueus, a prince of that land, he began to love her with an impure love . . . He robbed . . . her, raping her violently. Be on guard against going to see and being seen. Rather stay home on such days and do not go to a nearby church . . . to be seen, but hold your devotions alone covering yourself.[137]

This author employed Dinah's example to tell women not to simply control their eyes as other authors had done, but that really the only way to be sure to avoid rape was to stay home. Virgins could not be safe even on their way to church. On some days they should be fearful of everything. The underlying message of these examples was that women should fear all situations in which they could be raped. Even if they had the slightest doubt of their safety, it would be better for them to just stay home.

Superheroines of Purity

Through these examples we have seen that priests told women that they could not trust their own intentions, that they had to protect men from their beauty, and that they had to stay home to both avoid the danger of rape and to demonstrate their unwillingness. While this advice encouraged women to fear their own bodies as the driving force behind sexual attack and other forms of impurity, it also gave them the responsibility and power to act. Women could fight back, call out, cut off their noses, poke their eyes out, and avoid men by staying home. Through this long list of activities and responsibilities to prevent sexual impurity, Spiritual Virgins actually became powerful agents who were able to stop all sorts of sexual impurity—even sexual impurities that did not threaten them.

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[137] "Dese was wtghegaen om te besien de Vrouwen van dien lande/ daer sy met haer Vader was. Ende als haer ghesien hadde Sichem/ die Sone van Hemor Heueus, een Prince van dien lande/ so heeft hy se gemint met een onsuvere minne/ ende heeft haer gherooft ende beslapen/ met ghewelt haer vercrachtende. Wacht u van also te gaen sien en gesien te worden. Maer op sulcke dagen blijft by huys/ ende en gaet niet dan tot een die naeste Kerck/ ende daer en sit niet ter toon om van yemanden ghesien te worden/ maer hout u devotie in eenlicheyt u selven bedeckende." *Een Regel Waar Duer*, 33.

Like many medieval mystics, tertiaries and beguines living in the world, the Spiritual Virgins also believed that their suffering could expiate the sins of others. For theses religious women, "ascetic suffering [and illness] is both union . . . with the suffering Christ and service of one's fellows."[138] What is different in the priests' manuals for Spiritual Virgins is that suffering and illness helped them atone, not just for any sin, but most commonly for the sexual sin of others. Joanna van Randenraedt, for example, did penance for the sexual sin of others. Huysmans wrote that she "punished her own body for the sins of others, but no sin as cruelly as the impurity committed by others."[139] He continued:

> Hearing that a married woman lived impurely, [Joanna] violently punished her own body for these ugly sins at night . . . She would have killed her body and beat all of her blood out of her veins in order to wash out the impurity of her neighbors had it not been the case that she was forbidden to do this.[140]

Because of the ugliness of the sin and her belief in the ability of her own blood to wash out the impurity of others, Joanna offered her body to redeem the sin of her neighbor. A Jesuit, Ludovicus Jacobi translated the vita of the late thirteenth- early fourteenth-century Saint Lidwina of Schiedam, who was also anxious to do penance for sexual sin. She both prayed to God to mangle her so that she could avoid marriage and offered up her pure flesh as a sacrifice for the physical impurity of others. Some "worldly" people requested her help in curing them because they were "infected with the fire of impurity." Lidwina "tried to help them at once with advice, prayers, and self-torment until she brought them to purity of body and soul."[141] Lidwina and Joanna took responsibility for the sexual

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[138] Bynum, "The Mysticism and Asceticism of Medieval Women" in: *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Urzone Publishers, 1991), 69.

[139] "Sy bestrafte in haer lichaem de misdaeden van andere: maer gheen misdaet soo vinnighlyck, als d'onsuyverheyt die van andere bedreven wierdt." Huysmans, *Kort Begryp*, 323.

[140] ". . . horrende dat eene ghetrouwde vrouwe oneerlijck leefde, heeft sy dese leelijcke sonden in haer eyghen lichaem by nacht soo vinnighlijck gestraft . . . Sy soude haer lichaem ghedoodt, ende alle haer bloet uyt de aderen gheslaghen hebben, om de onkuyscheyt van haeren naesten uyt te wasschen, ten waer saecken dar dit haer verboden hadde geweest." Huysmans, *Kort Begryp*, 198.

[141] "Het ghebeurde somwijlen/ dat tot haer quamen eenighe vleesschelijcke menschen ontsteken met het vyer der onkuyscheydt; de welcke soo sy merckte hen seer te beklaghen over dese moeyelijcke bekoringhe/ trachte terstondt te helpen met raedt/ gheveden/ ende pijnen/ tot dat sy die tot de suyverheydt des lichaems ende der zielen ghebrocht hadde." Jacobi, 63.

sin of others because, though now pure, they too shared the female flesh that was often seen as the cause of sexual sin.

Rosweydus imparted another example of this. Saint Marina dressed as a monk and called herself Marinus, but a soldier's daughter accused Marina of raping her and making her pregnant. Marina did penitence for the rape she did not commit for five years, meanwhile also caring for the son of the lying woman, and then was received back into the monastery. It was only when she died that the other monks "realize her true nature . . . [by] raising her robes with which she was covered, they discovered that she was a woman . . ."[142] In addition to not wanting to give the monks cause to ban her permanently from the monastery, the implication is that Marina accepted her punishment because she felt disgust both for this woman's sin and for her own body as well. She had to punish and kill the part of her, which like the soldier's daughter, was capable of attracting a man and leading them both into sexual sin.

Huysmans also wrote the life story of Agnes van Heilsbach. Like Joanna, Agnes lived just over the border in the Spanish Netherlands and she actually served as Joanna's spiritual counselor for many years. Huysmans related a story in which Agnes and her sister took their responsibility for the sexual sins of others to a new level. They endeavored to stop a case of sexual impurity—a case that we would consider consensual sex between two adults. Agnes and her sister viewed this very differently. When they heard a rumor about "some improper behavior and fornication" that was taking place in their father's second house by the two women that slept there to protect it, they decided to do something about it. In order to see if it was true and put a stop to it, Agnes and her sister told the two women that their father wanted his daughters to sleep in the second house alone. Agnes and her sister then:

> . . . took great care to close all doors and windows, entrusting themselves to God's protection and his holy mother. And they went to bed with their clothes on so that they could quickly get up in the case that someone would come in at night, which is what she suspected had occurred. They put their trust in God, but could not sleep well because of restless thoughts caused by their great fear and anxiousness. Around midnight, they heard something

142 "Dan dien monick die Marinus heet/ die heir dickwijls met de kerre ghelogeert is/ hy heeft my vercracht/ ende ick hebbe ontfangen . . . haer nature vvordt bekent.. Ende 't cleet opheffende/ daer 't mede ghedeckt was/ sach dat het eene dochter was . . ." Ribadineira and Rosweydus, 355.

> rustling about the room they were in. Listening to what it was and looking through the darkness of the night, which was brightened by the moon, they saw a man come into the room. Agnes jumped up and clearly yelled: 'Jesus, Maria, preserve us. Who is here? If you are of God, explain why you have come. If you are of the devil, go back to the abyss of hell and leave us uninjured.' This man froze where he stood, shocked by this unexpected company, and then asked the two sisters to be quiet. Through his speech, Agnes recognized him. She flew at his head, grabbed his hair so that a part of it stayed in her hand. She threw many harsh words at him and carried herself so bravely, that this man had to leave . . . This impure person intending to find other company, returned to the house a second night and was fought off just as before.[143]

He did not come back a third night. Meanwhile, Agnes and her sister also concerned themselves with the purity of the two women. The sisters encouraged them to "sincerely better their evil lives." One ended up in a cloister and the other married.[144] Contrary to Bisschop's admonitions that a virgin should stay in her room, Agnes went out to another home at night and turned herself into a superheroine of purity. She put herself into a dangerous situation in which she feared for her own purity, only to attack the man who entered the home. She transformed herself from a possible rape victim into a powerful figure capable of stopping illicit sex. By placing herself in danger so that she could actively stop it, she rejected the impossible sort of responsibility that the priests had granted her by making her responsible for male sexual behaviour. Instead, Agnes claimed

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[143] ". . . [ze] droeghen groote sorge om seer nauwelijckx alle deuren ende vensters te sluyten: bevalen sich in de bewaernisse van Godt Almachtigh ende sijn H. Moeder: ende gongen te bedde in haer kleederen, om veer ligher op te staen, waert saeke dat iemant, volgens haer achterdencken, by nacht hadde binnen gekomen: Sy stelden beyde haer betrouwen op Godt: maer en konden niet wel sliepen, door de woelende ghepeysen, die haer groote bangigheyt ende benautheyt veroorsaeckten: ontrent middernacht, hoorden sy wat veselen ontrent de kamer daer sy binnen waeren: luysterden wat het was, ende saghen inde duysterheyt vanden nacht, die door de maene vermindert wiert eenen man in de kamer komen; sy springen op, ende Agnes roept overluyt: *Iesus Maria bewaert ons. Wie is hier? Zijt ghy van Godt, seght de reden van uye komste: zijt ghy vanden duyvel, vaert inden afgront der helle, ende laet ons onbeschaedight.* "Desen man door dit onverwacht gheselschap verbaest staende, versocht dat sy stil-swijgen souden: ende door sijn spreken wiert Agnes hem kennende. Vlieght hem in't hayr, soo dat een deel van sijn hayr in haer handt bleef: overgaet hem met straffe woorden ende draeght sich soo kloeckelijck, dat desen man genootsaeckt was te vertrecken . . . Desen onsuyveren mensch meynende alsdan ander geselschap te vinden keert oock den tweeden nacht wederom: die sy wederom verjaeghden als voren . . ." Huysmans, *Leven ende Deughden*, 32–34.

[144] ". . . om dese twee plichtighe Vrouw-persoonen tot oprechte beternisse van haer quaet leven te brengen." Huysmans, *Leven ende Deughden*, 34.

the capacity to physically withstand any threat to her sexual purity in whatever guise it might appear.

These last examples demonstrate some of the complex tensions that exist in the advice Catholic priests wrote for the Dutch Spiritual Virgins. Huysmans and others condoned the Spiritual Virgins' active lifestyles and willingness to do the tasks priests could no longer do. They granted a number of Catholic women the capacity to fight back if physically attacked, they gave them some hope that if they were raped they could retain their physical purity, and they also provided women with a long list of ways they could prevent sexual impurity—both their own and that of others. On the one hand, the priestly advice encouraged self-destructive behaviors and a mistrust of women's own bodies and intentions. But on the other hand, because priests made these women capable of protecting themselves and others from sexual impurity, it gave women the religious justification that allowed them to make themselves superheroines of purity.

Concluding Ideas

It is in essence through the priests' promotion of the strength of the Spiritual Virgins and their capacity to heroically fight off evil from within and without that both justified these women's active ministries and made them vital spiritual symbols of the Catholic Reform movement in the Low Countries. These women lived lives of Christian sacrifice following the examples of the early Christian virgin martyrs, but rather than facing the constant threat of death as their persecuted predecessors had, the major obstacle they faced according to their priestly advisors was the danger of rape and sexual corruption. Vital to their success, therefore, was the necessity of undertaking a host of activities to ensure their purity.

Priests further reassured the Spiritual Virgins and justified the dangers they faced in braving the outside world by teaching that if a Spiritual Virgin was raped, she could remain pure and even benefit because of her suffering. However, priests made a distinction between the women of the spiritual elite and other women. The latter did not benefit from the priests' optimism about these religious women's potential for maintaining purity. Just as one could witness the Spiritual Virgins' purity by looking at them, one could see average women's natural sinfulness. The biggest problem according to the priests was that religious women could easily lapse back into ordinary womanhood, accompanied by all the weaknesses and the penchant for lustiness that the lapse could entail.

Priests espoused the belief that raped women were at fault for having demonstrated their sexual willingness. They explained that rape was an action that resulted from a mistake the woman had made at some time prior. Escaping sexual attack was one of the most important elements in the stories of many female saints' lives because "to be raped would demonstrate a lack of merit . . ."[145] If a woman was raped, then she was not like the saints, whom God saved. Steur explained, "God will not forsake us, so long as we do not lack."[146] He meant that if you were worthy, God would save you. But Steur also proposed that women had to work hard to remain worthy: ". . . the glorious virtue of Purity can be easily corrupted through carelessness. Therefore a Maiden must always be wary that she is . . . like a Lily among the thorns, who cannot remain inviolate long without great care."[147] While a woman who had not suffered rape could continue to consider herself worthy of God's protection, a violated virgin had to assume that she had not been careful enough and that her purity had been corrupted through her own carelessness.

Indeed, the three women who were actually raped in the priests' stories, namely Dinah, Tamar, and the niece of Jacob the Hermit, were all at fault. Bisschop blamed Dinah for curiously looking about. The author of *A Rule through Which like a Mirror Christian Virgins . . . May Come to True Internal Beauty* accused her of not having stayed at home. Tamar should not have felt safe with her brother and Jacob the Hermit's niece should not have felt safe in the company of her seventy-year-old, religious uncle. There was not one example of a woman who had been raped who was entirely innocent according to the texts. This lack of a precedent of a woman who was not to blame for her own rape or sexual temptation led to the conclusion that if rape occurred, it was because of something the woman had done wrong or failed to do. No matter how hard a Spiritual Virgin worked to prevent the temptation of others and thus her own rape, she could never be sure she had undertaken all the possible or necessary steps.

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145 Saunders, 151.

146 "Godt en sal ons niet verlaeten/ ten sy dat wy ons seluen niet onbreken." Steur, 17–18.

147 "Alsoo die hooghe ende glorieuse deught der Reynicheydt soude lichtelick door onaachtsaemheydt worden ghecorrumpeert. Daerom moet een Maget altijdt ghedachtich zijn/ dat zy (soo langhe als sy met dit sterfelijck lichaem beswaert is) is als een Lelie tusschen die doornen/ die sonder groot neersticheydt niet langhe ongheschent en can geblijven." Steur, 64–65.

Despite priests' optimistic advocacy of the Spiritual Virgins' sacrifices for sexual sin and despite their unambiguous declarations that purity does not depend on physical intactness, their message concerning rape was ultimately disempowering for women in general and especially so for raped women. As we have seen throughout the advice for Spiritual Virgins, women were responsible for the temptation that their bodies and faces might cause men and had to act to prevent all sexual temptation including rape. Priests feared rape primarily because they believed that even religious women would succumb to the sexual temptation rape provided. In addition to this, two Catholic priests, Musius and Lumnius, imagined that long before rape occurred, women had initiated the process. Their assertions entirely eliminated the possibility of an innocent rape victim by explaining that rape was never a sudden event, but was rather the result of long-term corruption or temptation.

In this chapter we have seen how priests employed Catholic women as virginal symbols of the power of the Catholic Church. Just as the Hollands Maid symbolized the beautiful, yet vulnerable Dutch nation and inspired male citizens to fight for her protection, Spiritual Virgins operated as important sources of inspiration for the Catholic population of the United Provinces. The Spiritual Virgins signaled the superior power of Catholicism to elevate even the weakest sex to great spiritual heights. Preventing rape and other sources of sexual impurity was cast as the major struggle of these women's lives in part because of Protestantism's rejection of this as a possibility for unmarried women. In the next chapter, we turn to an examination of the challenges educated Dutch women offered to the way rape was defined and employed in the popular male-authored texts we have examined thus far.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN'S OBJECTIONS

On May 26, 1665, the beautiful Amsterdam Theater re-opened after eleven months of extensive renovations with the comedy *The Dissatisfied Fulvius and the Faithful Octavia* (*D'Ondanckbare Fulvius en Getrouwe Octavia*). This was the third and final play Catharina Questiers (1630–1669), a well-known Amsterdam poetess, translated from Spanish and rhymed for production.[1] Just as was the case at the initial opening of the theater with Vondel's *Gijsbrecht van Amstel* (1638), Calvinist ministers again tried to prevent the opening. This time, however, they were not able to delay this highly anticipated event.[2] The focal point of the renovations was the stage. While it had been too shallow and broad, craftsmen brought it in line with modern standards by making it deeper and shortening its width. They also added stage machines that allowed people or scenery to be raised from beneath the stage or lowered from above and more realistic décor so the scenery could be changed from a convincing-looking palace to a sea, a forest, or an army campground.[3]

Questiers' material was also much more modern than Vondel's *Gijsbrecht* had been. While Vondel's baroque masterpiece had been loyal to the rules of the ancients, heavily laden with symbolism, and characterized by long monologues, Questiers' play was on the cutting edge of the dramatic movement exemplified by William Shakespeare and Lope de Vega (1562–1635).[4] In *The Dissatisfied Fulvius and the Faithful Octavia*, the plot is moved along by dialogue, matters of love and honor are central themes, and emotions and complex motivation take center stage. It is not surprising that Questiers was more open to European dramatic innovations

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[1] Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. eds., *Met en zonder lauwerkrans: schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850: van Anna Bijns tot Elise van Calcar* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press, 1997), 316.

[2] Ministers did however successfully close the theater nine shows after the May 1665 reopening in June 1665. The next shows permitted were in February 1666. C.N. Wybrands, *Het Amsterdamsche tooneel van 1617–1772* (Utrecht: J.L. Beijers, 1873), 104, 122.

[3] Wybrands, 101–116. T. Amir, "De Opening van de Verbouwde Schouwberg te Amsterdam," in Robert L. Erenstein, *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden: tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, Amsterdam: Univ. Press, 1996), 258–265. Worp, 84.

[4] Aercke's introduction to Vondel, *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*, 20–21.

since she was forty-three years younger than Vondel and because it was seen as much more appropriate for women to translate works for the stage than to author new ones.[5]

The subject matter of the play more closely resembles Cats' moralistic study of marriages in *The Touchstone of the Wedding Band* (featured in chapter three) than Vondel's play. In fact, the climactic scene in Questiers' play brings to mind the scene of Menander in court. In both Cats' and Questiers' stories, men kneel before the women they have mistreated, beg forgiveness from a higher power, and are allowed to marry the women they wronged. Both stories thus focus on sexual misbehavior and its rectification through proper marriage. Despite this similarity, the story Questiers chose to translate for production in the Amsterdam Theater was one which provided a very different idea of female and male nature and of which sex was held responsible for sexual waywardness.

Questiers' play focused the audience on Fulvius' unfaithfulness to the beautiful Octavia and her steadfast loyalty. In keeping with ideas about the powers of women's beauty, Fulvius wrote a letter to her claiming: "Now you have wounded me with your beautiful eyes." As a result, he initiated a private meeting with her while her father, the king of Naples, was away: "... when the sun takes its turn toward the other side of the world I will come find you in the garden."[6] The play does not elucidate precisely what transpired during this meeting in the garden, but after Fulvius' affections shifted to Octavia's cousin, this letter was enough to make her father, the king, revoke Fulvius' title of duke and remove him from power.

Once punished, Fulvius suffers intense remorse: "I have recklessly scorned beauty itself ... and repaid such a faithful love with unfaithfulness."[7] He berates himself saying: "I have wounded [Octavia's] steadfast courage to the depths of her soul [and] godlessly violated my discernment and duty."[8] Fulvius' crime lay not in raping or coercing Octavia in any way. It is clear from the beginning that Octavia reciprocated his affection. However, Questiers charged Fulvius with "violating his duty" to the woman he had

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[5] Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 69.

[6] "Nv gy my hebt gewondt met uwe schooner oogen ... ik, wanneer de zon zal neemen zijne keer Naar 's werelts and're deel, u in de tuyn kom vinden ... Mijn leytsman is de min, dies ik de vrees verban." Catharina Questiers (de Hoest), *D'Ondanckbare Fulvius en getrouwe Octavia, blyspel, gerijmt door Catharina Questiers de Hoest* (Amsterdam: J. Lescaille, 1665), 41.

[7] "Ik heb de schoonheyd zelfs zoo dertel gaan versmaaden, ... En zulck een trouwe min zoo trouweloos geloont!" Questiers, 45.

[8] "'k Heb de langmoedigheyd tot in haar ziel gaan wonden: Erkentenis en plicht zoo goddeloos geschonden ..." Questiers, 53.

promised to love. His redeeming characteristic was that he recognized his error and repented, promising her: "I will show you so much gratitude, repentance and love, and shall wash my stained soul until it is pure."[9]

Octavia's character throughout the play is steadfast, noble, and demands justice, but is ultimately merciful. Believing Fulvius' contrition, she forgives him:

> The desire for vengeance leaves my heart making room for affection. Now that you admit your guilt and come begging for mercy, one of noble character can no longer desire vengeance; The lion halts when its enemy lies upon the ground.[10]

In this story Octavia is the judge who determines the fate of Fulvius. The image below depicts this sentiment: the penitent Fulvius kneels on the ground, once ready to take his life, his sword lies discarded to the side because Octavia has forgiven him. Although Questiers created this illustration for a poem she published in a collection called *The Humorous Olipodrigo* (1654), it fits the climactic scene of this play very well.

Questiers' play highlights Octavia's moral superiority to Fulvius. It thus makes a claim that despite misogynistic stereotypes, women can be more constant and trustworthy than men. What is more, Questiers expanded the range of sexual misbehavior for which men should be punished to include broken promises and seduction. This directly contradicted Cats' assessment that certain men, such as his character Menander, should be allowed to get away with rape. In Questiers' assessment, men should not even be allowed to get away with seducing a young woman, offering promises of love, and then changing his mind. Questiers was not the only woman to express this viewpoint in print. This chapter will highlight the works of many literary Dutch women who agreed that men should be held responsible for making false promises to young women, that women should demand retribution for sexual mistreatment, and that women could serve as excellent role models for men providing them with civilized, Christian alternatives to seduction and rape.

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[9] "'k Zou zo veel danckbaarheyd, berouw en min u tonen, En mijn bevleckte ziel zoo zuyver wasschen gaan, Dat gy niet wenschen zoud, of ik had u misdaân." Questiers, 56.

[10] "De wrack-lust ruymt mijn hart voor zijn genegentheyt. Nu gy uw schult bekent, en om genaâ komt smeecken, Kan d'edelmoedigheyt zich langer nu niet wreecken; De leeuw houd op, wanneer zijn vyant leyt ter aardt." Questiers, 55.

Plate 19. Questiers' image of a young man kneeling before a young woman from "Puppy Love," in *The Humorous Olipodrigo* (t'Amsteldam: by Evert Nieuwenhof 1654), 144 recto. Amsterdam University Library, OK 82-32.

Expanding Opportunities and Networks

The seventeenth century was a time when many women picked up a pen and began to write poetry, letters, plays, religious handbooks, moral advice books, and many other types of literature. As early as the mid-fifteenth century, Italian noblewomen circulated their letters and manuscripts and aristocratic women in Germany and France soon followed their example.[11]

[11] Diana Maury Robin, Anne R. Larsen, and Carole Levin, *Encyclopedia of Women in the Renaissance: Italy, France, and England,* (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2007). Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996), 441.

This international trend was fuelled by the value accorded to humanist education during the Renaissance and subsequent proliferation of academic and salon societies. When this trend reached the Netherlands and England in the late sixteenth century, far more well-to-do, middle-class women became involved. Questiers, the daughter of a wealthy plumber, educated in a variety of artistic activities, and a renowned Amsterdam poetess, is an example of this trend. Over the course of the early modern period, women writers became undeniably less rare.[12]

A closer look at the extent of this upsurge in the Dutch Republic reveals that there were at least 198 literary women who lived between 1600 and 1750. Considering the likelihood that many of their manuscripts have either not survived or lie undiscovered in archives, there were probably many more.[13] In the first half of the century, many women circulated their works in manuscript form and their published poems appeared in men's collections or as laudatory introductions to men's books. By the second half of the century, publishers released far more independent collections of Dutch women. Frequently, these were published on the initiative of friends or relatives, or appeared posthumously. Also in the latter half of the seventeenth century, women released a number of plays for publication and production in the Amsterdam Theater.

Dutch women had some advantages over women living in Catholic countries. Protestantism played a vital role in encouraging literacy and

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[12] Sarah Gwyneth Ross charts this development for women in Italy and England and proposes that, contrary to Joan Kelly's argument, women did indeed have a renaissance during the Renaissance and that during this time a feminism emerged that intellectual men helped foster. Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman As Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[13] Annelies de Jeu makes this estimate for the number of women writing (which includes some who left behind unpublished manuscripts) in the Dutch Republic in: *'t Spoor der dichteressen: Netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van schrijvende vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000). Schenkeveld-van der Dussen locates 160 women who published works in Dutch between 1550 and 1850. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 5. Marijke Spies explains that nearly all of the female poetry from the first half of the seventeenth century is written in relation to the poetry of men because this material was seen as worthy of conservation whereas their other work "was thrown away in due time." She gives the example that Maria Tesselschade Visscher's surviving poems are those she communicated in her letters to men, whose correspondence has been preserved, but "her translation of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, on which she worked for about twenty years, is lost, save the stanza she quoted in a letter to Hooft." Spies, "Women and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Literature," in *Rhetoric, Rhetoricians, and Poets: Studies in Renaissance Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Spies, Henk Duits, and Ton van Stien (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 123.

in providing access to books.[14] Taking into account the prevalence of unmarried priests as educators in Catholic countries, women in Protestant countries had a higher likelihood of having a close male relative who was an educator. The number of private libraries was three times higher in Protestant cities.[15] It was also during periods of religious and political upheaval, such as those that rocked the Low Countries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that women were most motivated to comment on these hot topics.[16] Although Protestant women authors had no official religious status, their collections contained many religious poems and they frequently esteemed their religious works as preeminent among their writings.[17] Even the works not specifically focused on religious instruction reveal their expectations of Christian morality and Godly obedience.

In addition to the advantages afforded them by Protestantism, Dutch women also benefited from the economic well-being of the Dutch Republic. Its financial success meant that there were many middle-class and elite women who had the resources and the physical space that allowed them the time and place to write. Well-to-do Dutch women had some respite from household chores and some, like the wealthy Amsterdamer Questiers as well as the Groninger Titia Brongersma, are known to have had a room specifically dedicated to their writing. For the Dutch merchant class, educated women were also an assertion of civility that their families had not acquired through a noble family ancestry. For the wealthiest merchants, literary pursuits were an addition to an already long list of womanly arts their wives and daughters aspired to, including calligraphy, glass engraving, drawing, painting, etching, singing, and playing musical instruments.

In spite of the impressive foray of women into new genres in greater numbers, early modern Dutch women faced several obstacles. First, women had little access to formal education. As young girls, these writers might have attended Dutch schools to learn religious doctrine, reading, writing, and arithmetic, or they might have attended French schools to study these subjects at a higher level, in addition to French language and culture. Latin schools were not open to them and, in fact, many of these women studied at home. Universities were also closed to women with

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[14] There were 68 publishers in the Dutch Republic in 1600 and 247 in 1654. Prak, 226.

[15] Claude Dulong, "From Conversation to Creation" in *Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, 399.

[16] Wiesner-Hanks, 196.

[17] Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 15, 18.

the exception of Anna Maria van Schurman who was allowed to sit in on Gisbertus Voetius's lectures hidden from view. This meant that women rarely studied Latin and Greek and thus were only able to read classical literature in translation at a time when accessing this classical heritage was deemed a primary intellectual goal.[18] Second, other literary institutions such as the Chambers of Rhetoric, the name for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century dramatic societies, were closed to women as well.[19] Third, women were always amateur authors—they were only able to write in their free time. Many women wrote until marriage; thereafter they lacked the time.[20] Married female authors, such as Johanna Coomans, were rare among the Dutch and usually both they and their male supporters found it necessary to explain that although they took time to write poetry, they were not ignoring their wifely duties.

In addition to the many obstacles in the path to becoming accomplished authors, women always had to emphasize their humility. If, as was less frequently the case, a woman's works were published within her lifetime, she felt compelled to claim that she had given her work to a man to edit and he had published it or that friends had made her release her work for publication.[21] Even learned and erudite women claimed to be uneducated and unintelligent. Johanna Hoobius, for instance, wrote: "My unlettered pen cannot reach their praise [women] . . . I am only a maiden . . . I nonetheless seek to pursue wisdom. Although I come much too short and have never mastered it . . .[22] While at a certain level this was simply a formulaic statement of modesty that women repeated until it seemed disingenuous, it was a constant reminder to women authors that unless they made their subordination obvious their work would be poorly received.

Their insistence upon humility allowed women to claim that the Christian virtues of humility, obedience, and love for neighbors were particularly suited to the female nature. They used this idea to explain how their religious writings could morally fortify their readers. Literary women and the preachers who legitimated their religious works also frequently cited

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[18] Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 35.

[19] Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 18–19. In 1598 there was at least one anonymous woman invited to compete in a literary competition organized by the Dordrecht chamber of rhetoric "The Blue Acolytes" according to De Jeu, 32.

[20] Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 7.

[21] De Jeu, 276.

[22] Johanna Hoobius, "Lof voor alle eerbare vrouwen en jong-vrouwen" from Hoobius, *Het Lof der Vrouwen geschreven en gerijmt*, (Amsterdam: Cornelis Jansz, 1643) in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 228.

biblical precedents to justify women's writings and claimed that it was their religious duty to use the talent God had given them. Wilhelmus à Brackel, Reformed minister of Rotterdam, validated the religious writings of his wife, Sara Nevius' (1632–1706), through the assertion that God uses all people to build up His church, whether "pious, impious, young, old, not only men, but also women." In his introduction to her works, à Brackel also employed biblical precedence:

> Women also worked to build up the Tabernacle . . . We know the praise songs of Debora, of Hanna, and of Maria, [and] women struggled to evangelize with Paul. God also poured out his spirit over women so that they could prophecy, as did the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist.[23]

The Protestant emphasis on the Bible thus provided positive models for religious women authors in the Republic.

As this last example illustrates, women writers had to rely upon informal support networks. For most women writers, any education, fame, or success in publishing occurred due to the support of men in their lives.[24] Well-educated fathers proved vitally important in providing education for their daughters in what has been termed the "household academy."[25] Roemer Visscher, for instance, oversaw the education of his two daughters, Anna Roemers Visscher and Maria Tesselschade Roemers Visscher, and was famous for hosting gatherings of intellectuals at his home in Amsterdam. Educated young women, like the Visscher sisters, demonstrated their fathers' talents as humanists and spread their fame. Supportive mothers and husbands were also instrumental in a woman's intellectual development. Literary women also adopted non-family members into their support networks. Anna Maria van Schurman, for example, adopted literary family members, including Marie de Gournay as her mother and Marie du Moulin as her sister.[26] In Amsterdam, an elderly Vondel had a brief

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[23] Wilhelmus à Brackel, quoted in de Jeu, 232. See also "Opportunities for Publications: religious works" chapter 6 in De Jeu, 227–243.

[24] De Jeu 25–27. See also Suzanna van Dijk and Jo Nesbitt eds., *'I Have Heard About You': Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: from Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004).

[25] Sarah Gwyneth Ross, "Esther Inglis: Linguist, Calligrapher, Miniaturist, and Christian Humanist" in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, ed. Julie D. Campbell, and Anne R. Larsen (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 161. Ross details the development of the household academy from 1400 to 1580 in *The Birth of Feminism.*

[26] For much more on these informal support networks see Campbell, and Larsen, *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters.* See also Ross, part II: The Household Salon, 1580–1680, 191–319.

fatherly exchange with a precocious ten-year-old Katharina Lescailje, who sought him out as her source of inspiration and received a kind hug and encouragement.[27]

Women authors also formed important bonds with other learned women. Younger women were frequently inspired by earlier generations of female authors. Questiers, for example, is said to have happened upon Maria Tesselschade Visscher's tombstone when out walking through Amsterdam and became inspired by her legacy.[28] In Groningen, Brongersma encouraged a number of other women to compose poems. The title print for her book shows this community of "art-loving" women with whom Brongersma surrounded herself.[29] Some seventeenth-century Dutch women, such as Questiers and Cornelia van der Veer, Van der Veer and Lescailje, Lescailje and Sara de Canjoncle, and Brongersma and Elisabeth Joly, also shared intensely emotional friendships as is evinced by the survival of their Petrarchan love poetry addressed to one another.[30]

As recipients of a Christian humanist education—however informal—many learned Dutch women were valued members of intellectual circles and shared many of the interests and beliefs of their male counterparts. Literary men and women employed similar secular, neo-classical imagery and poetic forms and frequently expressed the belief that the Republic would retain its favored status only so long as its inhabitants remained obedient to God. Men and women praised one another in short poems, corresponded with one another, published in one another's volumes, visited one another's curiosity cabinets, helped advance each other's literary ambitions, and used one another's fame to gain notoriety. They formed literary networks with men and women of their own cities, across the Republic, and across Europe. Although there were certainly exceptions, many learned men and women espoused the ideals of religious peace, reconciliation, and Dutch harmony at the expense of the strict Calvinist cause. Learned men supported women's writings, often heaping hyperbolic accolades upon their works.

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[27] Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 396.
[28] Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 316.
[29] De Jeu, 275.
[30] Lia van Gemert, "Hiding Behind Words? Lesbianism in 17th-Century Dutch Poetry," *Thamyris. Mythmaking from Past to Present* 2 (1995): 11–44.

Rape in Women's Writings

Similar to the many male authors considered thus far, the women whose writings form the basis of this chapter demonstrated a concern with rape. A focus on this subject matter provides us with particularly poignant moments of conflict between the sexes. As we examine the ways that the women whose works are examined in this chapter interpreted rape differently from their male contemporaries, it is instructive to consider the possibility that art historian Diane Wolfthal raised:

> . . . women, in their roles as viewers, teachers, and writers, often see with two minds. Trained to accept the patriarchal interpretations of the dominant culture, women also interpret texts and images from a subversive, female point of view.[31]

While literary women whole-heartedly agreed with the prevailing acceptance of female inferiority to men and that idleness leads to vanity and corruption, they also offered powerful challenges to the specific means their culture employed to perpetuate their subordination.

The following section will outline the different ways female authors depicted rape and defined who was morally responsible. Their stories not only point out that women do not easily forget sexual violence and that men are to blame for their own violent actions, but also that there are many positive examples of intelligent, chaste women. We shall see that the following women authors challenged male-authored narratives of rape by refusing to make light of it, by providing examples of angry rape victims who avenged the violence, and by pointing out the ways male sexual corruption leads to this crime against women.

Many of these assertions contradict the moral lessons gleaned from the stories of rape analyzed thus far. As this chapter demonstrates, women authors did not replicate the sanitized, symbolic stories of rape found in the works of Vondel and Cats.[32] When Vondel depicted the nation and the

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[31] Employing Mary Garrard's example, Wolfthal explains that when Artemisia Gentileschi painted images of sexual violence, contrary to many male artists she depicted the pain and anguish of the act. Wolfthal, *Images of Rape*, 4, 25. Gerrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). See also Nancy K. Miller, "Rereading as a Woman: the Body in Practice," in Susan Rubin Suleiman, *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[32] Heroic rape, according to Wolfthal, is the way rape is portrayed in "myths and legends in which the rapist is a Greek or Roman god or hero." She contends that the canonical works of the Renaissance and the Baroque periods "aestheticize and sanitize [this] violent

city of Amsterdam as vulnerable, he employed beautiful women raped by sadistic Spanish tyrants, thus potentially emphasizing the weakness and vulnerability of living women. Cats employed stories of rape that had even more insidious consequences. As examined in detail in chapter three, Cats avowed that women's own corrupt bodies brought rape upon themselves, he used metaphors for rape that obscured the pain and suffering of victims, and he proposed that a raped woman should happily marry her rapist if he was wealthy enough to provide for her.

Contrary to Cats' assessment, when rape appears in the following women's writings it is unequivocally awful. There is no sense of ambiguity or any question of whether the raped woman was truly harmed or perhaps even to blame.[33] Katharina Verwers (Dusart) (1618–1686), a well-to-do painter's daughter who lived in Amsterdam and who rhymed the first play by a woman produced for the Amsterdam Theater, *The Spanish Heathenness* (1643), wrote a long poem in the voice of a woman lamenting her rape. This poem, taken up in a collection of poems called *Amsterdam Mishmash* (1658), describes the state a woman finds herself in immediately after her rape:

> There is strewn beautiful clothing
> Now I have lost my jewelry,
> My garland is regrettably destroyed,
> My splendor, my beauty
> Lay completely annihilated,
> Oh my, where can I flee!
>
> Alas! Where do I now wander…
> Who shall comfort me
> If only you, sweet death,
> Will come swallow me
> And tear me away from this awfulness…[34]

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sexual crime" in many ways that have obscured the way it is portrayed in many less-studied artistic traditions. Wolfthal, 5.

[33] Other medieval and early modern women who wrote about rape shared these Dutch women's sensitivity to the pain and violence inflicted during rape and attempted rape, including Christine de Pisan, *City of Ladies* (1405), Marguerite de Navarre, *The Heptameron* (1558) (especially stories 4, 15, 16, 18), Maria de Zayas, *Disenchantments of Love* (1647), (see stories 1, 2, and 9), and Aphra Behn, *The Rover* (1677) and *Lucky Chance* (1686), and many others.

[34] "Leght daer prachtich gewaedt/ Nu ick mis mijn sieraedt, Mijn krans is laes verslonde, Mijn pronck mijn fraeyigheen/ Leydt geheel te gronden, Ay my waer vlucht ick heen! 2. Elaes! Waer dwael ick now, Aemilia vol rouw/ Aen wie sal ick troost vinden/ Als aen u, soete doot, Komt wilt mijn verslinden/ En ruckt myn uit deez noot." Katharina

While this poem begins with superficial details about torn, scattered clothing and lost jewelry, it continues to dwell upon the bodily damage suffered. The rapist destroyed the speaker's "garland"—a euphemism for her virginity. Although Verwers shied away from a literal depiction of rape, she nonetheless directed the reader's attention to the physical violence of the attack. The annihilation of the young woman's "splendor" and "beauty" could once again refer to the clothing and jewelry, but more poignantly highlights the fact that through her loss of virginity she no longer has the capacity to appeal to any suitor. Verwers focused on this emotional humiliation; the victim longs to flee or die, but frustratingly finds herself unable to do either. This excerpt of Verwers' poem is a stark depiction of the pain and torment of rape reminiscent of Hooft's depiction of Machteld's response to rape in his play *Geeraerdt van Velzen*, in which she too pleads for death to swallow her.

More astonishing are the few texts on the subject of rape in which women authors expressed a desire for violent retribution. Verwers' poem cited above also demonstrates this sentiment:

> Thus I call out to the Gods:
> Please torment this evil one,
> Inflict him with a thousand deaths . . .
> Oh! Highest Jupiter,
> Ruler turn your eye upon me,
> And avenge my sad anguish,
> And strike this worthless scoundrel
> With your lightening . . .
> Come Charon with your boat
> And transport this false rascal
> To Pluto and his Fellows,
> And repay him
> Many tyrannical torments,
> This I pray to the Gods of hell.[35]

Verwers' poem starts with the musical directions: "Stem: Naar dien mijn Godlijckheydt" in *Het eerste deel van de Amsterdamse mengel-moez: bestaende Vit veelderhande Bootzigh, en Geestigh rijm-tuigh, als Kusjens, Minnedeunen, Verjaar-zangen, Drink-lieden, Klinkrijmen, en tusschen de zelve verzien met Rondeeltjens en andere znaakerijtjens, noit meer in 't licht geweest* (Amsterdam 1658), 86–89.

[35] "Soo roep ick aen de Goon: Pijnt hem met duysent doon . . . Die ghy by Jupijn swoordt. 5. Ach! Opperste Iupijn, Beheerscher ooght op myn, En wreekt myn droef elenden, En wilt deez snoode Fieldt/ Met u blicxsem schenden . . . 6. Komt *Charon* met u schuit/ En voerdt deez valsse guit/ By *Pluto* en zyn Heeren, En wilt hem tot een loon, Heel tierannich temteeren, Dat bid ick d'helse Goon." Verwers, 86–89.

Verwers used classical mythology to demonstrate this rape victim's desire for violent retribution. The raped woman wholeheartedly blames the rapist for his lies and villainy. Further, she expects the king of the gods and the god of the underworld to avenge her. Verwers thus constructed the rapist as a man bound for hell and suggested that rape signified an unforgivable depravity.

A particularly fierce example of a victim's desire for retribution appears in a poem by Brongersma, born in Friesland but likely living in Groningen at the time she wrote this poem. It is titled: "The Enraged Lioness" (1685). In this remarkable poem, Brongersma praised a contemporary female heroine in the tradition of the catalogues of exemplary women written by the likes of Johann Beverwijck (1639), Hoobius (1643), and Ludolph Smids (1685). In a prose introduction to her poem, Brongersma explained that in Lyons in January 1685, a nobleman scandalously abandoned a woman called Lione. Rather than simply wilting away in shame, Lione dresses as a man and "violates" him.

> Away Dido, away Lucretia
> Away pagan filth, with all your specters,
> Lione's offering is enflamed
> She follows the example of the French Judith:
> And wins (such honor laid)
> The Laurel, through fist and dagger.
> 'Traitor,' she cries out in her anger,
> 'You who takes pleasure in the role-playing
> Of strange events on the tragic stage?
> Come closer, with fresh courage.
> I will teach you to violate maidens,
> And to wish you had never met me.'
> While she thus spoke, she ran her violator through with her sword
> Then she saw him take his last gasps
> While he was robbed of his life.
> Upon which she said: 'That is for
> The oath you so falsely swore to me
> Go thief descend to Pluto's choirs [i.e./ the underworld] . . .
> This is the just punishment for such a menace.
> No lion allows itself to be tormented by wolves
> A woman frequently offers resistance to the hearts of men.[36]

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[36] "Weg Dido, weg Lucretia/ Weg Heydens rot, met al u spoken, Lionaes offer is aan 't rooken/ Zy stapt de Fransche Iudith naa: En wint (:soo d'Eer daar is geleegen:) De Lauwer kroon, door vuyst, en deegen. Verrader roeptse als verwoet/ Gy die vermaak neemt in de spelen/ Van vreemdigheen op Treur Toneelen? Coom nader, met een frisse moet. Ik sal u leeren Maagden schennen, En my niet meer te willen kennen, Mits riegt se dwars den

This story seems ambiguous at first. Does Lione avenge her seduction and abandonment or her rape? Brongersma's choice of words does not help us answer this question because "violate" (*schennen*) and "violator" (*schenner*) could apply to rape or seduction. In fact Brongersma did not find the distinction important. By not marrying Lione, the nobleman violated her honor. What is more, Brongersma described the nobleman as a "menace" (*bedreiger*), which suggests that he threatened her. In any case, Lione was not intimidated for long. Once dressed as a man she utters a most shocking threat: "I will teach *you* to violate maidens." In this poem, Brongersma equated the penetration of a woman in rape and the subsequent destruction of her honor with the penetration of a man's abdomen with a sword and the destruction of his life. Her poem explicitly states that his violent murder and trip to hell is just recompense for rape—an attitude that suggests that since there is no way her rapist can compensate for Lione's lost honor, he does not deserve a trial, let alone Christian forgiveness and reconciliation.

Not only did Brongersma praise this violent, contemporary woman for avenging her sexual violation, her first two lines challenged her friend, frequent correspondent and literary supporter Smids, doctor and scholar of antiquity in Groningen.[37] She was clearly aware of his *Gallery of Exceptional Women* (1685); it commenced with an introductory poem by Brongersma and the publisher was Carel Pieman, to whom Smids had introduced her and who would publish her book the following year.[38] Further, the first two lines directly refer to his catalogue of the virtues and vices of women. In his *Gallery*, Smids' first two examples of female chastity are Dido and Lucretia. Brongersma brushes aside Smids' examples of chastity in order to replace them with Lione.

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schenner door/ Die zy de laatste snik siet geeven/ Wijl hy berooft is van het leeven. Daar seytse nog: dat hebt ge voor/ De Trouw: soo trouloos my ontswooren/ Gaa Rover daal in Plutoos Chooren . . . Dog dit is regt Bedriegers loon: Geen Leeuw laat sig van Wolven terten/ Een Vrouw trotseert vaak Manne herten." Titia Brongersma: "The Enraged Lioness," in Brongersma, *De bron-swaan, of mengeldigten* (Tot Groningen: Carel Pieman, 1686), 43–44. See also the treatment of this poem in Lia van Gemert et al., *Women's writing from the Low Countries 1200–1875: a bilingual anthology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 324–325.

[37] Brongersma also utilizes the same image of the woman demanding justice as a lioness that Questiers used in her play, *The Dissatisfied Fulvius and the Faithful Octavia* (1665) that is quoted at the outset of this chapter.

[38] Ludolph Smids, *Gallerye der uitmuntende vrouwen: Of der zelver deugden en ondeugden, in byschriften en sneldichten, vertoond, met verklaaringen en konstplaaten verrijkt* (Amsterdam: by Jakob van Royen, 1690).

What then might Brongersma have taken offense to in Smids' examples? It was certainly not his use of classical examples. Although her poem begins by calling them "pagan filth," her own work is full of allusions to classical characters. Rather, Brongersma was offended by his choice of Dido (the queen of Carthage, also called Elise) and Lucretia (whose rape by Sextus Tarquinius instigates his murder and the foundation of the Roman Republic) because each of these women had stabbed and killed herself when a man forced himself upon her.

In the illustrations that accompany Smids' stories, Dido and Lucretia appear vulnerable. Their twisted stances suggest that they are off-balance, possibly stumbling, and certainly in retreat. Their faces register shock and uncertainty rather than resolution. When compared with Lione's violent fortitude, these women seem sad and pathetic. Dido and Lucretia take the violence of the men in their stories and turn it against themselves. As these women prepare to commit suicide, they appear beautiful and weak. Brongersma's Lione, on the other hand, takes on the clothing and persona of a man in order to resiliently fight back and make her violator pay for his offense against her.

Brongersma also penned a poem in praise of Smids' play, *Roderik, or Raped Florinde.* This play, first written by Spanish playwright Lope de Vega (1562–1635), resembles the story of the rape of Lucretia, insofar as family members of a raped woman overthrow a tyrant. In this play, Florinde, raped by the Visigoth king of Spain, colludes with her father (the king's general Count Julian) and invading Arabs to overthrow the immoral tyrant.[39] Due to its plot of rape and retribution, this play functions to make specific claims concerning political crises, national identities, religious conflicts, and gender roles. Furthermore, for Christians it is a study of how immorality can bring a society to ruin.[40] Unlike the story of the rape of Lucretia, however, Florinde does not kill herself but enacts revenge upon the raping tyrant. Brongersma wrote: "Yes, she herself, out of spite allowed the Moors to overtake her violator, and steal his Head and Crown. Thus fell the Empire though wicked immorality . . ."[41] It is likely that she offered Smids praise, particularly because his translation, like

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[39] Brongersma, "Op 't Treurspel van Roderik, Konink der Gotten," in *De bron-swaan*, 74.

[40] Elizabeth Drayson, *The King and the Whore: King Roderick and La Cava* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 2.

[41] "Iae liet door Mooren overstryen/ Haar schender selfs, uyt spijt, en roven Hooft, en Kroon. Dus valt het Rijk ter neer door stoute geylighede . . ." Brongersma, 74.

Plate 20. Elise/ Dido from Ludolph Smids, *Gallery of Exceptional Women* (Amsterdam: Jakob van Royen, 1690), 76. Amsterdam University Library, OK 63-5775:3.

Plate 21. Lucretia from Smids, *Gallery of Exceptional Women*, 83. Amsterdam University Library, OK 63-5775:3.

her own poem "The Enraged Lioness," features a woman who avenges her own violation. The oldest surviving copy of Smids' *Roderik* is from 1744 so we only know that he completed writing it prior to Brongersma's publication of the *Swan at the Well* in 1686.[42] Perhaps Smids translated this play in response to Brongersma's criticism of his use of Dido and Lucretia as models of chastity. If this play is indeed Smids' answer in a discussion of women's responses to sexual violence, it seems likely that he was persuaded by Brongersma's belief that rape should be avenged in order to restore Christian morality, but he was not convinced that the victim should avenge the rape herself.

These cases in which female authors provided examples of women who had demanded or enacted violent retribution stand in stark contrast to the men's stories of rape discussed in chapters two and three. For instance, the victim of rape, Machteld, in Hooft's play *Geeraerdt van Velzen*, dissuades her husband from personally avenging her rape in order to allow the official system of justice to punish her rapist. Not only is Machteld calmer than her husband, she also espouses the action that will be better for the state in the long run.[43] Cats provided an even more jarring contrast in his story "Two Raped and Both Married" in which a raped woman shows up at her rapist's trial dressed as a bride and begs the court of law to allow her to marry him.[44]

Many female authors were also eager to reject the most injurious stereotype that women were the source of all sexual immorality. As alluded to above, the primary advocate of the idea that rape occurred only after a woman began to experience internal corruption and thus women were to blame for rape, was Calvinist moralist Cats. Many of the following women were quick to refute this claim. They pointed out precisely how men were responsible for rape and seduction.

Of the five most famous early seventeenth-century Dutch women authors, three argued in their works that men needed to change their ways in order to prevent rape. These three women were Anna Roemers Visscher (1583–1651), daughter of renown Humanist Roemer Visscher, Johanna Coomans (?–1659), wife of an important Zeeland bureaucrat, and Johanna Hoobius (ca. 1614–1642), daughter of a Zeeland mayor and author of the first collection of poetry entirely by a woman in the Republic. Each

[42] De Jeu, 122.
[43] Hooft, *Geeraerdt van Velsen.*
[44] Cats, "Twee verkracht, en beyde getrout," *Alle de Wercken*, II, 82–87.

of these women wrote poetry for each other or praised one another, and each corresponded with Cats. Visscher was the first of these to become well known throughout the Republic. Cats dedicated his *Maidens' Duty* (1618) to her and it was her visit to Zeeland that inspired the collaborative project *Zeeland Nightingale* (1623) to which Visscher, Cats, and Coomans contributed.

Coomans offered the most obvious challenge to Cats' emphasis on female responsibility for rape. In the *Zeeland Nightingale*, Coomans published an emblem and poem entitled *Coat of Arms of All Honest Young Men* that is a direct riposte to his emblem *Coat of Arms of All Honorable Maidens* published in his book *Maidens' Duty* (1618) (see illustrations 24 and 25). Cats symbolized virgin women as the tender grapes in the basket in the center who, according to his text, had to avoid the touch of a wide variety of insects, birds, and even human hands to maintain their purity. This symbol focuses on the fragility of female honor and the unappealing nature of a woman once violated. What is more, this is a symbol that does not offer women any means of self-preservation. How does a delicate grape protect itself from a bird?

In her poem, Coomans agreed with Cats that women have some responsibility in limiting male sexual temptation, but her emblem features a dangerous male tongue. She focused her audience's attention on a disembodied tongue to emphasize its central role in leading many women to sexual ruin. In the accompanying poem she asked: "Who violates the Bunch of grapes, which is more fragile than glass?" She answered: "... it is the tongue by which so many maidens come to fall..."[45] Instead of placing sole responsibility of avoiding rape and other forms of sexual corruption on women, she stressed men's responsibility for women's sexual contamination. She argued that men had to own up to some of the guilt should illicit sex occur and work to prevent it by using only honest and chaste speech.

Verwers also left behind a poem that emphasized the dishonest words of men as the cause of sexual violation. In yet another excerpt from her poem in the *Amsterdam Mishmash*, an angry young woman curses her rapist:

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45 "Wie schent den Druyven-tros, die brooser is dan glas?... Het is alleen de tong, waer door soo vele maechden/ Gecomen zijn ten val..." Johanna Coomans, *Wapen-schild alle eerlicke jong-mans toe-geeygent*, in *Zeeuuse Nachtegael* (Middelburg: Ian Pietersz vande Venne, 1623), 5.

Plate 22. Cats, *Coat of Arms of All Honorable Maidens*, in *Maidens' Duty* (Middelburg, Ghedruckt by Hans van der Hellen, 1618). Leiden University Library, 1019 C 23: 2.

Plate 23. Johanna Coomans, *Coat of Arms of All Honest Young Men*, in Adriaen Pietersz. van de Venne, Jan Pietersz. van de Venne, Willem van de Passe, P. de Jode, and P. Serwouters, *Zeeland Nightingale* (Middelburg: Jan Pietersz van de Venne, 1623), 1 recto, Leiden University Library, 1487 H 9.

O robber of my glory,
And of my maiden garland
Oh! Evil thief
Think of your promises and words,
And of your false oaths,
That you have made by Jupiter's sword.[46]

According to this young woman, the "thief" of her virginity made false promises and oaths, likely promises of marriage. Verwers' use of the terms 'robber' and 'thief' seems to signal rape and yet the suggestion of false promises seems to signal seduction. This distinction was of little consequence to a seventeenth-century woman whose honor was sullied by a deceptive oath as we saw earlier in Brongersma' poem "The Enraged Lioness," in which Lione told her dying rapist "That is for the oath you so falsely swore to me." Like Coomans and Brongersma, Verwers pointed out that it was not necessarily the irresponsible actions of women, but the dishonest speech of men that led women to the violent, irrevocable loss of female honor. Quite contrary to Cats' view that women were responsible for both seduction and rape, these women writers expanded the definition of rape to include the male destruction of female honor through false promises of marriage.[47]

Questiers (1630–1669), whose poems appeared in at least seven collections between 1654 and 1663, and who published three plays for the Amsterdam Theater, also wrote a poem on this theme entitled "Puppy Love" in a collection called *The Humorous Olipodrigo* (1654).[48] In her poem a young man pleads with a young woman to listen to his declarations of love. She resolutely replies: "I listen to no sad complaints, nor to your sorrowful cries; Because my heart is like a stone, That grows harder every day, Therefore I beg you to stop your begging . . ." In Petrarchan style her suitor continues his unrequited entreaties, and eventually the young women is impressed:

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[46] "4. O roover van myn glans, En van myn Maechde-krans/ O! eerdief vol boosheeden, Denckt op beloft en woordt, En u valsche Eeden, Die ghy by Jupijn swoordt." Verwers, 86.

[47] The marriage law of 1656 validates this expanded definition by adding a new law against the seduction of 'honorable' young girls. See Van der Heijden, "Women As Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence . . .", 623–644.

[48] The title translates literally as "Calf Love" but puppy love is also equivalent. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 316.

> Your words seem steadfast; If only the heart was the same as the tongue, I could perhaps be compelled to love you, My heart is moved by your sorrowful entreaties; But I fear you are too unreliable and young.[49]

Much like Coomans and Verwers, Questiers highlighted the disjunction between what men said and what they meant. While drawing attention to the shortcomings of men that frequently led to sexual immorality, Questiers created a discerning female character who knew better than to believe a man's promises of love.[50]

Verwers, Coomans, and Questiers thus wrote as authorities on how young men should treat young women. As in salon culture elsewhere, women made gentlemen.[51] More specifically in the climate of Christian humanism championed in the Republic, women had to make good Christian gentlemen whose actions supported Protestant morality. This is also legible in Questiers' etching that commenced this chapter (see plate 19), which features a young man gallantly wooing a young woman, while she teaches him not to make false promises and to champion reason over emotion. It was thus within the realm of women's expertise to instruct young men on the civilized, Christian alternatives to seduction and rape. At the same time these authors instructed young men, they produced images of reasonable, steadfast, and worthy women.

Like Coomans, Verwers, and Questiers, Hoobius (1614–1642) also rejected the stereotype that women were the source of all sexual corruption in her *Praise of Women* (1643), published posthumously by J.H. Krul. Her book opens with the poem "Praise for all honorable women and young women and an objection to all their detractors." She demanded that "those who wish to undermine women" answer her question:

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[49] "Ik luyster na geen droevig klagen, Noch ook na u náár geween; Want mijn hart is als een steen, Dat verhart gestadig alle dagen, Daarom bid ik staakt al u gebeên . . . Stanvastig lijkt gy in u spreeken; Maar waar 't hart gelijk de tong, Licht 'k my tot u liefde dwong, Mijn hart beweegt wel door u droevig smeken; Maar ik vrees, gy zijt te los en jong." Questiers, "Kalver-liefde," [*Het eerste deel vande koddige Olipodrigo, of nieuwe kermiskost, . . . in allerley geestigh en snaax rijm-tuigh, aardige, minne, kluchtige en boerige zangen*] (*Amsterdam: by Evert Nieuwenhof 1654*), 145–7.

[50] Questiers' wariness of men's false promises of marriage echoes one of Maria de Zayas' themes in *The Disenchantments of Love* (1647), especially in the second novella, which like Questiers' 1655 play, features a loyal and constant heroine named Octavia. Despite their similarities, Questiers was far more optimistic about the potential for women to reform men's behavior.

[51] Hufton, 434.

> Do you not know any better than to speak
> Or destroy the reputation of women with your violence,
> These days one finds many arrogant fools
> Who diminish the fame of the female sex;
> And say that [they are] completely robbed of wisdom,
> And that their heads can sustain no understanding.[52]

At this point in the poem, Hoobius chastised a broad range of people who "destroy the reputation of women with . . . violence." Both rapists and slanderers could fall into this category. Soon, however, Hoobius turned to the classic example of Lucretia, but only to suggest that she was only one of many good women:

> Lucretia, so beautiful, a model of integrity
> Demonstrated her faithfulness with her sad death.
> Well now, shall we then shroud the praise of the devout
> From which multitude so much good has arisen:
> Because one woman of little virtue has lived in wicked sinfulness . . .?[53]

Like Vondel, Hooft, and Smids, Hoobius employed Lucretia as a positive example of chastity, but here she employed a new logic. She claimed that just because there are evil women, not all women are evil. She proceeded to make her case by arguing the same point about men:

> Did not Amnon violate Tamar, that menacing traitor? . . .
> Did not Herod decapitate his own wife,
> As soon as he had robbed her of her luster and honor?
> Shall anyone therefore begin to scorn men,
> Or diminish their praise with words or thoughts . . .
> Oh no! Their glory and honor must be highly praised:
> But since this has already been done long before me,
> I shall not take on that task.[54]

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[52] "Of gij niet beter weet als uwen mond en spreekt/ Of dat gij met geweld der vrouwen lof verbreekt, Men vindt nu hedendaags zeer veel verwaande gekken/ Die 't vrouwelijk geslacht van haren roem onttrekken; En zeggen dat het is van wijsheid heel berooft." Hoobius, "Lof voor alle eerbare vrouwen en jong-vrouwen," in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 227–8.

[53] "Lucretia zeer schoon een beeld der eerbaarheid, Heeft met de droeve dood betoond haar trouwigheid. Wel, zal men dan den lof bedekken van den vromen/ Waarvan dat menigmaal is zo veel goed gekomen: Omdat een lichtekooi in stoute zonden leeft . . ." Hoobius in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 229.

[54] "Schendt Ammon Thamar niet dien listigen verrader? . . . Heeft ook Herodes niet zijn eigen vrouw onthoofd, Als hij haar glans en eer had met geweld beroofd? Of iemand nu hierom de mannen gaan verachten, Of breken haren lof met woorden of gedachten . . . O! neen haar lof en eer moet hoge zijn geprezen, En haar beroemde geest meer ere zijn

Hoobius' argument elegantly claimed that women are not the source of all sexual sin. By naming both men and women who have behaved immorally, she issued individual blame for individual offenses. By highlighting the examples of Amnon and Herod, she also defended Tamar's and Mariamne's innocence in the face of these men's violent acts. While arguing against the connection of women and corruption, Hoobius and these other women authors focused on the evil actions of male rapists and the good behavior of particular, educated women.

This notion that men were responsible for female violation resulted in the rehabilitation of the image of Helen of Troy. There is evidence that most early modern versions of this myth feature a Helen who seduces Paris at the behest of the goddess of love and that in fact, "Helen's name was a shorthand for infidelity" at this time.[55] Nonetheless, three Dutch poetesses chose to blame only Paris. In a beautiful poem that Visscher published in the *Zeeland Nightingale* (1623), she described her rebellion against Cupid. As she ruminated over the story of Paris and the rape of Helen, she concluded that lust was the destructive force that can bring about the end of civilizations:

> [Paris] only saw as far as his obscene lust and not a bit further . . . What was his reward? O unhappy man! Only misery and sorrow.
> Who shall not want to root out wanton lust from his heart
> When he sees the mountainous ruins of burnt out Troy?[56]

Here Visscher emphasized specifically how one man's failure to control his lust and his subsequent abduction of Helen caused great devastation and loss of life. She placed no blame on Helen. Further, Visscher stated her intention to surpass Paris by learning from his mistakes. Contrary to Paris, Visscher's appeal to reason and her embarrassment at getting swept up in her feelings save her from immorality:

> O you helmeted Maid, [Minerva] you most beauteous of the Goddesses,
> How could you have the heart to see me conquered so?
> How could you have the heart to see her, your devoted servant
> So unworthily debased by a child [cupid]—a child!

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bewezen: Maar mids dit overlang voor mij al is gedaan, Zo zal ik deze zaak hier nu niet roeren aan." Hoobius in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 229–230.

55 Maguire, 104.

56 Anna Roemers Visscher, "Rebellion against Cupid," translated by James A. Parente, Jr., in *Women Writing in Dutch*, ed. Kristiaan Aercke (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 165.

I burst with spite whenever this shameful bastard
Praises his mother's [Venus'] beauty and denigrates your own.
No, no, I do not value a body beautiful and sound
As dearly as a righteous temper in which virtue can be found. [57]

Visscher's emotive poem immediately brings to mind a poem Cats published only five years later entitled "Reason Speaks," in which two biblical figures, like Paris, had raped women because they failed to consult reason. Visscher's success in remaining reasonable and chaste signaled her triumph over all such men who failed to do so and her status as an exceptional woman as well.[58]

Hoobius also employed Helen as a positive example. She called upon men to change their minds about women in general as the writer Stesichorus had about Helen:

For once change your pen as Stesichorus did,
Who concerning a Greek woman Helen was displeased
He spoke of her deed with slanderous disgrace
But then afterwards retracted it all.[59]

Although this Greek poet primarily changed his attitude toward Helen to cure the blindness he incurred when he insulted her, ostensibly contemporary Dutch men should change their opinions about her because Paris had been to blame for seducing her.

A final example of a Dutch literary women's treatment of the story of Helen appears in a play translated by Lescailje (1649–1711). She was the daughter of an Amsterdam publisher, took over her father's business in 1679, was a prolific writer of poetry, and completed seven plays, most of which were promptly produced in the Amsterdam Theater. The story of Helen appears in Lescailje's play *Cassandra*, which was written in 1684 but not published until her complete works appeared in 1731. In her version, Clymenestra, Helen's sister and wife of King Agamemnon, warns her son Orestes about Cassandra, a slave brought back from Troy. "Consider that she was born a Trojan. Consider that her brother came to disrupt all of Greece; That weak Paris, who abducted the wife of the king

[57] Visscher, "Rebellion against Cupid," in *Women Writing in Dutch*, ed. Aercke, 165.
[58] Cats, "Reason Speaks," *Alle de Wercken*, I, 445.
[59] "Verandert eens uw pen als Stesichorus dede, Die op een Griekse vrouw Helena was 't onvrede/ Hij sprak van hare daad met lasterlijk schandaal, Maar komt het naderhand herroepen altemaal." Hoobius in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 234.

Menelaus, Helen, my sister, and broke her marriage bond."[60] Lescailje's words are not ambiguous; like Visscher and Hoobius, Lescailje proved willing to rehabilitate the reputation of Helen of Troy by squarely placing the blame on Paris.

In addition to these six women who authored works that emphasized the evil deeds of men in initiating sexual corruption and rape, one famous female artist, Judith Leyster (1609–1660) also broke convention by painting a similar theme. Leyster was exceptional because she was the daughter of a brewer (unlike other Golden Age female artists who came from artistic families and worked in the workshops of their fathers) and she was the only woman among the thirty or so Haarlem painters' guild members around 1635, and perhaps the only woman to favor painting scenes of everyday life over still-lifes.[61] Also extraordinary is her painting *Man Offering Money to a Young Woman* (1631).[62] In this painting, a man offers money to a young woman, which in many other genre paintings of the seventeenth century signals a desire to pay for sex. In contrast with male artists' portrayals of men propositioning women, including such artists as Frans Mieris, Gerrit van Honthort, Dirck van Barburen, and Johannes Vermeer, this young woman does not invite the proposition. She is chastely clothed and there is no wine or tobacco to suggest that she has abandoned herself to the temptations of the flesh. In fact the man is not even able to distract her from her work, which is a vital detail. Since Livy's story of Lucretia, diligent sewing had been seen as an ideal way for women to prevent idleness and sinfulness and to demonstrate female modesty.[63] Leyster depicted this young woman as a model of virtue; because of her steadfastness she is impervious to this man's advances. Much like the poetesses' work examined thus far, Leyster emphasized male responsibility for illicit sexuality; she also made a very distinct statement about ordinary women's capacity for moral behavior.

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[60] "Denk dat ze is een Trojaain gebooren. Denk hoe haar Broeder kwam gantsch Griekenland verstooren; Die laffe Paris, die vorst Menelaus vrouw, Heleen, myn Zuster, schaaket, en brak zyn echte trouw . . ." Katharyne Lescailje, *De Mengelpoëzy van Katharyne Lescailje, derde deel* (Te Amsteldam: by de erfgenaamen van J. Lescailje en D. Rank, 1731), 10.

[61] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Doornspijk, The Netherlands: Davaco, 1989), 13–14. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender*, 178–183.

[62] Judith Leyster, *Man Offering Money to a Young Woman*, 1631. Inv. Nr 564. Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis.

[63] Annemarie Vels Heijn, Akkerym Doevendans, and Epco Runia, *Verborgen verhalen: betekenissen van Vlaamse & Nederlandse schilderijen 15e–18e eeuw* (Amsterdam: Ludion, 2003), 222.

Plate 24. Judith Leyster (1609–1660), *Man Offering Money to a Young Woman*, 1631. Inv. Nr 564. Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis.

Questiers made a similar claim for women's industriousness in her poem entitled "Neither" in the *Amsterdam Mishmash*, her third and final poem explaining her signature statement (*zinspreuk*): 'I love my freedom.' She described how she uses poetry and art to avoid the temptations of love and wine:

> The pinnacle of Parnas [mountain of poets]
> That is my heart's delight . . .
> O noble art of painting,
> Your exercises bring me more joy
> Than all of Venus' love,
> Favor me with your favor;
> So that I will hate Bacchus' joy;
> Your art dominates my senses,
> Your love produces rest . . .[64]

Questiers loved her freedom because it allowed her to write poetry and paint, both of which kept her busy. Like Leyster's, Visscher's, and Hoobius' contributions, this poem provided an example of a moral woman. It suggested that one did not have to die protecting one's honor like Lucretia to be a model of chastity. In fact, echoing Anna Maria van Schurman's dissertation on the subject: *Whether a Christian Woman Should be Educated* (1641), these learned women argued that education and erudition were ways to allow women to lead more moral lives.

This educated, occupied and thus chaste woman is unmistakably depicted on Hoobius' title page (see plate 25). Not only does this title page display an industrious Johanna Hoobius, it is full of allusions to her many talents. Most obviously, the open book on the ground lends her work authority and symbolizes wisdom and authorship, as does the presence of Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom, who holds the laurel crown of poets above her head. The two musical instruments indicate artistic well-roundedness, but could also symbolize the influence of the muses or family harmony. And propped up against the table is an embroidery frame, which indicates that she tends to her needlework and other womanly duties as well.[65]

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[64] "Het spitsige Parnas/ Dat is mijn hartsvermaake . . . O eedle schilderkonst, Uw oefening verheugt/ Veel meer als Venus' mine, Vergont mij maar uw gonst; Zo haat ik Bacchus' vreugd; Uw konst bezit mijn zinnen, Uw liefde baart een rust . . ." Questiers, "Neither" in *Amsterdamse Mengel-moez*, 107–9 and Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 318–319.

[65] Johanna Hoobius, *Den Lof der Vrouwen*, ed. Johan van Dam, http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/hobi002lofd02_01/colofon.php (2009). For another example of the demonstration of female virtue and industriousness see Gesina ter Borch's *Triumph of Painting over Death*,

Plate 25. Cornelus van Dalen de Oude, *Portrait of Johanna Hoobius*, from Hoobius, *The Praise of Women* (1642). By permission of the Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren.

Through these examples, learned Dutch female authors sought to rehabilitate the tarnished image of women. They contested the view that all women are vulnerable and corrupt. Their examples of rape sound remarkably modern: they provided examples of women vehemently outraged by rape, claimed that men alone were responsible, and that neither men nor women were a source of evil. Yet their critique of the male narrative is unstable. Even as these women authors provided positive examples of women using reason and education along with a host of artistic activities such as writing, music, and embroidery to improve their morality, they conceded that women who were either uneducated or idle were receptive to corruption. Learned women were thus only able to carve out a niche of moral respectability for exceptional women like themselves, not for all of womankind. At this early stage of critique, women authors challenged some of the most virulent misogynistic ideas and loudly proclaimed that men were to blame for rape, and yet, as they provided examples of good Christian women, they simultaneously reasserted the assumption that women shared culpability for rape or sexual corruption if they did not better themselves morally through educated, artistic endeavors.

Women and Nation-building

Many seventeenth-century Dutch women took their writing seriously and used it to make serious claims. When these women wrote poetry concerning public events, they most frequently commemorated marriages or birthdays, lamented deaths, or praised the house of Orange, the family of the Stadholders. A handful of women described battles and lauded conclusions of peace, always mentioning God's hand in determining the outcome or using events to call the Republic to more godly conduct.[66] Most significantly, learned Dutch women claimed to play an important role in nation building. In the same way that they maintained that education and artistic aptitude enabled them to be better people, they declared that these skills also made them indispensible to the Republic. The men who praised them, encouraged them to continue writing, and who supported their endeavors to publish, agreed. Thus, a broad swath of

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1660 in Hoenig, "The Space of Gender in Dutch Painting," in *Looking at Dutch Art: Realism Reconsidered*, 187–189.

[66] Van Gemert, "Vijf vrouwen over oorlog en vrede," *Historica* 21 (1998): 7–9.

well-to-do, "art-loving" (*kunst-lievende*) intellectuals applauded women's artistic achievements and their steadfast patriotism, which allowed them to create entirely different metaphors for the nation than those encountered in the male-authored literature examined earlier in this book.

Seventeenth-century women authors made themselves indispensible in a number of ways. A serendipitous development occurred across Europe at this time, namely the development of a competitive feeling of national pride in having educated women within a nation's borders. Learned men thus encouraged Dutch women to practice writing and publish their works because their existence signaled the Republic's status as a powerful and civilized nation. Hoobius' poem that introduces *The Praise of Women* (1643) demonstrates this pride, first in learning more generally, and thereafter in Dutch women's erudition more specifically:

> The very beautiful literatures of the Latin languages,
> That were brought to us from the lofty salons of heaven
> Are now preeminent in our united land,
> Practiced and honored among intelligent people.
> Certainly then our century is one of learned women,
> Once completely bare, as I cannot believe,
> It is known how Coomans' worthy child [Johanna Coomans]
> Was loved by everyone due to her lively intelligence.
> She wrote a lovely poem celebrating the youth.
> And with a sweet invention her reason taught:
> How that a lover should behave in his youth,
> Around a young woman full of honor and virtue . . .
> And mistress Anna also, a maiden full of cleverness, [Anna Roemers Visscher]
> Did she not frequently spend her youth occupied
> With pleasant poetry when she accounted to us,
> A mirror for the youth, a sweet maiden duty [Cats' *Maiden Duty* (1618)][67]

[67] "De letteren zeer schoon van de Latijnse talen, Die ons zijn voortgebracht uit 's hemels hoge zalen/ Die nu wordt aldermeest in ons verenigd land, Gevorderd en geërd van lieden van verstand. Wel, is dan onze eeuw nu van geleerde vrouwen, Gans t' eenmaal ontbloot, dat kan ik niet vertrouwen, Het is ons nog bekend hoe Comans waarde kind/ Wordt om haar geestigheid van iedereen bemind. Zij gaat een aardig dicht de jonge jeugd vereren. En met een zoeten vond de redenkunst haar leren; Hoe dat hem dragen zal een minnaar in zijn jeugd, Omtrent een jonge maagd begaafd met eer en deugd . . . En joffrouw Anna ook, een maagd vol geestigheden, Ging die niet menigmaal haar jonge tijd besteden/ In zoete poëzie wanneer zij ons bericht, Een Spiegel voor de jeugd, een zoete maagdenplicht." Hoobius, "Lof voor alle eerbare vrouwen en jong-vrouwen" in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 233.

She ended this list of contemporary women with Anna Maria van Schurman whose fame was known throughout the entire land. Hoobius praised Van Schurman as the zenith of learned Dutch women, which she certainly was with her knowledge of twelve languages, theology, philosophy, medicine, and botany, in addition to most of the womanly arts admired at the time.[68] Many other men and women agreed with Hoobius that educated women could, in the words of Margareta van Godewyck, "be of service to the fatherland."[69] It is arguable that in the officially Calvinist Republic, these women served as living examples of God's miraculous work and thus proof of his favor. Since the existence of learned women lent the Republic a modicum of status, they were empowered to offer braver challenges to accepted ideas about morality and the nature of men and women.

While these women were important sources of national pride and often extolled their love of their fatherland and the House of Orange, they also backed a competing impulse—an intense local civic pride. Amsterdam, as the cultural center of the Republic, was a center of gravity for the Dutch literati. Learned men and women frequently commended Amsterdam and Holland and even used them as synonyms for the entire United Provinces. To combat the sense of being overwhelmed by the production of Amsterdam, other cities and provinces asserted pride in local women authors. Friesland and Groningen in particular provided excellent cultural bases for female authors precisely because of this compulsion to define an identity against that of the dominant province of Holland. The north was also a fertile ground for literary women due to the support of the Stadholders' court in Leeuwarden as well as to the explosion in the number of publishers who had serviced the needs of the University of Groningen since its establishment in 1614.[70]

Sibylle van Griethuysen, who lived in both Friesland and Groningen after her marriage, is a good example of the function of learned women in civic competition. In an unusually boastful poem, Johan van Nyenborgh, native of Groningen (1657), measured Van Griethuysen against the most celebrated learned men of her time. He claimed Van Griethuysen for Groningen and stated that she could hold her own against the likes of Hollanders Hooft and Vondel and Zeelander Cats. Van Nyenborgh furthermore wrote: she is "the Urania [muse of astronomy and philosophy] of our

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[68] Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 208.

[69] "Dan zult gij dienstig zijn ook voor het vaderland." Margareta van Godewyck, "Nulla dies sine linea" in Schenkveld-van der Dussen, 291.

[70] De Jeu, 276–7.

City and Land."[71] In her own writing, Van Griethuysen was much more humble, but did express her pride in both Friesland and Appingedam, a city near Groningen.[72] However, her local pride and concerns did not prevent her from expressing national pride in her correspondence with Constantine Huygens or in collections of poetry that included works of poets from all regions of the Republic.[73]

This impulse is also noticeable in Zeeland, where, with the publication of the *Zeeland Nightingale*, Cats and other authors asserted a cultural identity against that of the dominant Holland. What is particularly telling is that even as the Zeeland authors distinguished themselves, the volume was stimulated by the arrival of Hollander Anna Roemers Visscher, and the authors expressed a love for the larger "fatherland." Abraham van der Myle, for instance, wrote:

> Thus it sparked in me a great joy
> That I now saw, that our century, our times,
> Our fatherland also enjoys this good
> By all the happiness that Heaven grants us,
> That now we also have among our women
> Poets, just as long ago among the ancients.[74]

The urge to point out the greatness of individual provinces and cities and to maintain a more local identity did not conflict with the authors' connections to the Republic. They frequently expressed pride in the fact that civilized society had begun to manifest itself throughout the United Provinces.

Not only did learned women offer their towns, provinces, and the Republic a kind of cultural currency, they often translated or wrote stories that featured positive examples of strong women, who were both indispensible to their nations and steadfastly patriotic. Lescailje offered two similar examples of steadfastly loyal women. In two of her plays, *Cassandra* (1684) and *Herod and Mariamne* (1685), powerful men fall in love with enemy women and forget their allegiances to kin and country while

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[71] Johan van Nyenborg, "Lofzang op Sibylle van Griethuysen" in his *Hemelse troostborne* (1657) in De Jeu, 111.

[72] Sibylla van Griethuysen, *Rym Gestelde Claeg-lieden Jeremiae* (1645) in Schenkveld-van der Dussen, 252–258.

[73] See De Jeu chapters two and three.

[74] "Doch 't stak ook aan in mij een groot verblijden/ Dat ik nu zag, dat onz' eeuw, onze tijden, Ons vaderland genoten ook dit goed/ Bij al 't geluk dat ons den *Hemel* doet, Dat nu zo we look onder onze vrouwen/ Poëten zijn, als eertijds bij den ouwen." Abraham van der Myle in *Zeeuse Nachtegael*, excerpt in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 18.

conversely the women never waiver in their loyalty to their fatherland.[75] For example, in *Cassandra*, the title character's beauty overpowers her captor's son Orestes when he sees her bound as a war captive:

> My friend, her luster was intensified by her state: Steadfast fierceness showed so beautifully on her lovely face . . . A noble sadness frequently emanated from her eyes . . . I was intensely enflamed as ever a heart could smolder from Love. And this incomprehensible glow feels much more like sorrow—within an hour it brought more disasters within this breast than the Greeks brought within Troy's walls in ten years.[76]

While Orestes forgets that she is the enemy, Cassandra does not:

> Ach! What are you trying to start? Gods! Always the same complaint! Consider who I am, and who you are, and who you must be. We are enemies required to fear one another . . . You are a Greek: and was it not Greek hands that so cruelly dared to burn my Fatherland? Obliterated my State and parents? And pitilessly shackled me as a slave, torturing me in my suffering?[77]

Cassandra unwaveringly refuses to betray her fatherland or forgive her enemies for killing her parents and enslaving her. A similar situation arises in *Herod and Mariamne*. Mariamne takes a powerful stance against Herod:

> And shall I ever love that executioner, the murderer of my Friends after so much injustice and torture? That would debase my honor; or may the water, very nearly so cruel, Give to me my Brother's lot [death], and the end of all my suffering.[78]

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[75] Englishwoman Elizabeth Cary had published an English version of this play, *The Tragedie of Mariam*, in 1613.

[76] ". . . haar nagedragen, Vermeerderde, myn Vriend, haar luister in dien staat: Standvaste fierheid blonk zo schoon op 't schoon gelaat . . . Een eed'le droefheid scheen vaak uit haar oog te straalen . . . 'k Ontfing zo fel een vlam/ Als immermeer de Liefde in eenig hart deê blaaken. En dies onlesb're gloed doet vry meer droefheid smaaken/ Voert binnen deeze borst meer rampen in een uur/ Dan in tien jaar de Griek bragt binnen Tojens muur." Lescailje, *Kassandra* in *De Mengelpoëzy van Katharyne Lescailje, derde deel* (Te Amsteldam: by de erfgenaamen van J. Lescailje en D. Rank, 1731), 5.

[77] "Ach! wat begint ge? Goôn! altos die zelfde klagt! Denk wel wie ik ben, en wie gy zyt, en moet wezen. Wy zyn vyanden om elkandere te vreezen . . . Gy zyt een Griek: en zyn het neit de Grieksche handen/ Die durfden zo verwoed myn Vaderland verbranden? Verdelgen mynen Staat en Ouders? en die wreed/ My boeiden als Slavin, my tergende in myn leed?" Lescailje, *Kassandra* in *De Mengelpoëzy van Katharyne Lescailje*, III, 21.

[78] "En zoude ik noch, na zo veel ongelyk en plaagen, Den Beul, den Moorder van myn Vrienden, liefde draagen? Dat my eer 't vuur verslinde; of 't water, ruim zo wreed, My geef myn Broeders lot, en't eind van al myn leed." Lescailje, *Herodes en Miriamne* in *De Mengelpoëzy van Katharyne Lescailje*, III, 180.

In spite of Herod's affection for her, Mariamne wants only to follow her relatives in death: "My kin have courageously gone before me: I burn with longing to follow in their footsteps."[79] Both Mariamne and Cassandra are powerful examples of loyalty to one's fatherland and one's people. Lescailje did not provide these women with speeches decrying their own violation, but rather focused on their perseverance and resolute contempt for their immoral enemies. Taken together, these plays argue against Cats' contention that happy marriages can result from violent force and abduction. Contrary to the men's desires in the plays, only tragedy ensues after the application of brute force.

Of the women who wrote political poetry, three women in particular, Anna Roemers Visscher (1583–1651), her sister Maria Tesselschade Visscher, and Lescailje, all Hollanders, used metaphors for the nation that were very different from the ones we examined earlier.[80] Contrary to the images conjured by Vondel and Johan Gijsius of the beautiful and vulnerable Hollands Maid and the city maiden threatened with rape and death by hostile enemies, these female authors did not imagine the state as a vulnerable woman, but constructed entirely different images altogether. It is noteworthy to mention that the Visscher sisters and Lescailje wrote during periods when powerful enemies threatened to overwhelm the Republic. For the Visscher sisters in the first half of the century, the enemy was Spain, but by Lescailje's most productive years during the last quarter of the century, Spain was an ally and the enemies were both Britain and France in the first half of the 1670s, and then solely France until 1678. It is typical that in desperate times women's exclusion from particular activities was relaxed.[81] Particularly for the eldest Visscher daughter and Lescailje, this meant that they were able to claim powerful roles for women in society, in the church, and in political commentary during the height of the wars with Spain and France.

Even before Anna Roemers Visscher published her additions to her father's *Meaningful Images* (1620), she completed a manuscript version

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[79] "Myn maagen traaden my hier in kloekmoedig voor: 'k Brand van verlangen, om te volgen op hun spoor." Lescailje, *Herodes en Miriamne* in *De Mengelpoëzy van Katharyne Lescailje,* III, 205.

[80] For an excellent example of how women used metaphors differently than their male counterparts in different contexts see Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). She demonstrates that medieval religious women employed empowering female metaphors that emphasized the commonalities between women and Christ.

[81] Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender*, 196.

translation of Georgette de Montenay's (1540–1607) *Christian Emblems or Devices*.[82] Although this work is a translation, it is full of Visscher's own original contributions. She made changes to adapt the work to Dutch political circumstances and even explained to Montenay in an introductory poem that she had not followed her words exactly. It is not strange that Visscher did not have this text published in 1615. At this early date, many literary women preferred to circulate their works in manuscript form so they could control their circulation and yet have some readership outside the home.[83]

In the first emblem of this circulated manuscript, Visscher contends that women play a vital role in supervising religious sincerity both within their own families and for society at large. This emblem, entitled "Every wise woman buildeth her house" depicts a queen who "uses her own hands to build a temple." Visscher tells the reader that the queen is an example for all women and explains that within the temple the exemplary queen stores up virtues as quickly and resolutely as possible so that no wicked vices can sneak in. As is common with emblems, the temple can be understood on three distinct levels; it could refer to women's own bodies as temples of God, to women's homes, or to the church. Thus Visscher imparts the idea that women must maintain their personal virtue, be a source of religious instruction on virtue in their homes, and monitor the purity of the official Dutch Church. The emblem's illustration clarifies precisely how women are to take an active role in scrutinizing morality and religion in the Republic; the queen does not use stones, but books as the building blocks of her temple. Once again, education is the justification for women's authority. In this case that authority extends to religious purity and instruction.[84]

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[82] Georgette de Montenay, *Emblèmes ou devises chrestiennes: composées par damoiselle Georgette de Montenay. Lyon: J. Marcorelle, 1571.* This text was republished in 1584 and 1602 as an *album amicorum*, in which most of the left page next to the emblem was left in order to allow readers to add their own poetry. These were the editions Visscher used in her translation. Martine van Elk discusses this "collaborative type of publication" and details the changes Visscher made to de Montenay's text and highlights her political contributions in a number of her emblems in Van Elk, "Courtliness, Piety, and Politics: Emblem Books by Georgette de Montenay, Anna Roemers Visscher, and Esther Inglis," in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, edited by Campbell and Larsen, 183–210.

[83] Van Elk, "Courtliness, Piety, and Politics," 194.

[84] Anna Roemers Visscher, Emblem 1: "Sapiens mvlier aedificat domvm," *Cent emblemes chrestiens* (c. 1615). Emblem Project Utrecht: http://emblems.let.uu.nl/av1615_introduction.html. See also Van Elk, "Courtliness, Piety, and Politics," 199.

In addition to this encouragement that women actively monitor the church, several of Visscher's emblems provide a rather shrewd and shrouded form of political commentary. Take for instance emblem 26, entitled "You will be punished by evil," which depicts a Philistine attacking a naked, innocent child (see plate 26). Visscher's poem explains that those who attempt to kill the innocent are they themselves killed:

> Impotent is the assembled might of the world.
> To wound that which the good and strong God protects.
> The poisonous arrow with which you try to take aim at the innocent
> God turns toward You and thwarts your evil intentions.
> The United Netherlands is a mirror hereof
> Stormed with great violence: by God's powerful hand
> Kept standing against hope. Oh God to you is the honor
> You defend the humble and smite the wicked.[85]

Visscher states in very plain terms that the nation, the United Provinces, is the innocent child protected by God. Although she does not name the Philistine, in the political context of 1615, he is mighty Spain. Similar to the patriotic literature examined in chapter two, Visscher does not portray the Dutch nation as militant, but rather as completely dependent on a militant God to protect His people and destroy their enemies. It is in fact God who turns the arrow so that it is released into the forehead of the Philistine.

Like Hooft's patriotic play, *Geeraerdt van Velzen*, discussed in chapter two, this emblem was penned by Visscher during the Twelve Years' Truce when many people were anxious that Spain might betray the treaty. These anxious authors frequently desired to point out the more fearsome enemy who lay in wait outside of the nation. By praising God for smiting their enemy, Visscher foreshadowed the final destruction of her mighty enemies and the end of war.

Again, Visscher comments on the contemporary political situation in emblem 28 "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (see plate 27). Here two snarling lions threaten a lamb but are restrained by a bridle held by a hand descending from the heavens.

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[85] "Onmachtich is de macht des werelts t'saem vergaert, Om quetsen dat de goe en stercke Godt bewaert. De gifte pijl die ghij gaet op d'onnosel micken/ keert Godt tot v: en breeckt v quaet voornemen sticken/ Hier van een spiegel is t'vereende neederlant/ Bestormt met groot ghewelt: door Goodts vermogen hant bleef staende tegens hoop. O Godt v is de Eer/ Ghy hoedt d'ootmoedighe. de stoute smyt ghij neer." Anna Roemers Visscher, Emblem 26: "A malo castigaberis," *Cent emblemes chrestiens* (c. 1615). Emblem Project Utrecht: http://emblems.let.uu.nl/av1615_introduction.html. See also Van Elk, "Courtliness, Piety, and Politics," 200.

Plate 26. Anna Roemers Visscher, "You will be punished by evil," emblem 26, *One Hundred Christian Emblems* (c. 1615). Emblem Project Utrecht: http://emblems.let.uu.nl/av1615_introduction.html.

Visscher depicts the United Provinces as a vulnerable entity, a sheep, and once again the hand of God protects it. Visscher describes the emblem thus:

> Two bloodthirsty and vicious lions went out to take a sheep
> And to Steal it from the herd, to greedily guzzle it up.
> But notice the faithful shepherd who keeps watch over his charges
> Surprises the Robbers and restrains them with a bridle.
> The great shepherd Christ, has thus many times
> Delivered these united Lands from the teeth of tyrants
> Bloodily sharpened on her. Be grateful and spread
> Oh people! To everyone God's great goodness.[86]

[86] "Twe Leuwen fel en wreet hadden een schaep gaen Rocken/ En Roven uijt de kudd', om vratich op te slocken. Maer siet de herder trouw neemt wacker op haer goom/ Verrast

Plate 27. Anna Roemers Visscher, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," emblem 28, *One Hundred Christian Emblems* (c. 1615). Emblem Project Utrecht: http://emblems.let.uu.nl/av1615_introduction.html.

For Visscher, the twin tyrants King Philip II of Spain and his governor to the Netherlands, the Duke of Alba, are the vicious lions roving the Dutch countryside ready to seize upon the whole of the Republic. Later, in his *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*, Vondel would also use a vicious lion to bring to mind hated Spanish tyrants. But for Vondel the Dutch state was a woman raped, not a sheep threatened with lions' teeth. Visscher employs images

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de Roovers en bedwingtse met een toom. De groote herder Crist, heeft Dees vereende Landen/ Soo menichmael verlost wt de tyrannen tanden Bloedich op haer gewet. Weest danckbaer en verbreijt/ O volck! aen yder een Godts groote goedicheyt." Anna Roemers Visscher, Emblem 28: "Deus superbis resistit hvmilibvs dat gratiam," *Cent emblemes chrestiens* (c. 1615). Emblem Project Utrecht: http://emblems.let.uu.nl/av1615_introduction.html. See also Van Elk, "Courtliness, Piety, and Politics," 200–203.

of an innocent child and a sheep to represent the vulnerability of the state.

Visscher's sister Maria Tesselschade Visscher (1594–1649) provided yet another image of the Republic under attack. She did so in her poem entitled "Answer" (1630), a response to Vondel's "Of the Amsterdam Academy" in which he requested that all Dutch poets "of the Unified Netherlands and Lovers of golden freedom" define "the best and worst kind of tongues."[87] Here the younger Visscher sister argued that the "Preachers [threaten to] sever the cord that binds the seven arrows together"—that is, that the Calvinist preachers threatened to disband the seven United Provinces.[88] Thus, when she described the vulnerability of her nation she utilized the imagery of severing cords and arrows rather than defenseless female bodies. Both Visscher sisters explored their own capacity to engage in political commentary and to construct alternative images for the vulnerable Dutch state.

In terms of her total production and her concern with political poetry, Lescailje was the most extraordinary of the seventeenth-century Dutch women authors. The extent of Lescailje's political commentary, which she authored between the 1670s and shortly after the turn of the eighteenth century, was so great that after her death her relatives compiled her political poetry into its own volume within her three-volume complete works published in 1731. Also unusual for a woman writing in Dutch in the seventeenth century was the powerful voice she claimed for herself in political commentary. Embodying Freedom or Amsterdam, she praises, commands, and condemns Stadholders, governors, and foreign monarchs. For instance, when Lescailje speaks as Amsterdam in her poem "On the Departure . . . of His Highness, William III . . ." (The fifteenth of August, 1672) she is a fearless, outspoken woman. Amsterdam praises the stadholder as a blindingly powerful "Orange Sun" and simultaneously disparages France and England as "Those two awful pests who Destroy City upon City and the Land." In this poem, Lescailje expresses pride in Amsterdam's city regents (*burgerheeren*) who concern themselves with her protection, place their lives and goods at the city's disposal, and watch over its citizenry. Most importantly these city regents:

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[87] Joost van den Vondel, *De werken van Vondel 3, 1627–1640* (Amsterdam: Maatschappij Voor Goede en Goedkoope Lectuur, 1929), 296.

[88] Translated by Parente in *Women Writing in Dutch*, 171–3; For the entire poem see Sneller, Olga van Marion, and Netty van Megen, *De gedichten van Tesselschade Roemers* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), 64.

> . . . heroically work to turn away the bloodthirsty Rulers from my wall with courage . . . following your [William III's] considerable footstep . . . Cast your eyes upon my walls. They can endure iron, steel, and lead, and all sorts of violence: They will not weaken under any strike or blow, of the Enemies' powerful army. You see the machine [*werktuig*] on my wall, from which my attackers must retreat, Else they will be flattened upon my ground.[89]

Amsterdam is a woman, but not a helpless one by any means. She has impervious walls that will not suffer penetration from any violent source. Rather than being a weak, beautiful maiden whom men must protect, Amsterdam is a pugnacious woman who helps the regents turn away enemies.

Lescailje's earlier poem "The Liberated Europe, Freedom Fighting on the Danube, by the Army of Allies" (1697), which celebrates the victory of the Grand Alliance of European powers against Louis XIV in the Nine Years' War led by Anglo-Dutch Stadholder-King William III, also features a female figure. Lescailje depicted Europe as Andromeda, abducted by a French harpy and chained to a rock. She is anxious, miserable, fearful, and in great danger, but only briefly. After five lines, the heroic British Perseus sweeps in to save her from a sea monster. Andromeda is saved and becomes Perseus' bride. Thus, Lescailje employed the image of a vulnerable female, but one who is only briefly endangered, never violated, and immediately victorious. Andromeda is also never endangered by evil men, but by a sea monster. This is thus a fantastical mythological tale that is unlikely to give rise to fears that ordinary women are vulnerable.

In addition, it is Perseus' victory that is really at stake here. Lescailje's poem praises William III's victory as so many other Dutch women's poems praise other Stadholders. The final lines of the poem direct the reader's attention to the hero's reward and fame: Europe "the beautiful bride . . . unchained, joyously greets and thanks her Liberator, beholden to his considerable heroic courage; While his untouched glory is displayed along the entire universe . . ."[90] The joyous female embodiment of Europe

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[89] "Zy poogen de al te felle Vorsten, (Die naar myn onderdaanen bloed/ En goed zo godvergeeten dorsten,) Op uw doorluchtig spoor, met moed/ Manhaftig van myn wal te keeren . . . slaa uw oogen op myn muuren. Zy kunnen yzer staal en lood, En allerley geweld verduuren: Zy zullen voor geen slag en stoot, Of 's Vyands magtig heir bezwyken. Gy ziet het werktuig op myn wal, Dat myn bespringers moet doen wyken, Of op myn grond verpletten zal." Katharyne Lescailje, "On the Departure . . . of His Highness, William III . . ." in *De Mengelpoëzy van Katharyne Lescailje*, I, 42.

[90] "De schoone Bruid . . . ontketend, haar Verlosser vrolyk groet/ En dankt, verpligt aan zyn doorluchten heldenmoed; Terwyl zyn glory langs 't Heeläl praalt ongeschonden . . ." Lescailje, "On the Departure . . . of His Highness, William III . . ." in *De Mengelpoëzy van Katharyne Lescailje*, I, 14.

Plate 28. Andromeda and Perseus, from Nicolaes van Ravensteyn, *Description of the Joyous Entry . . . of her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, France, and Ireland* (Amsterdam: Pieter Nolpe, 1642), 23. Leiden University Library, THYSIA 821.

is merely a sideshow to the central focus on William III's victory. This is very different from male artistic treatments of this subject that invariably focused their audiences on the first part of this story in order to highlight Andromeda's vulnerable female flesh. Nicolaes van Ravensteyn's rendering of this theme in his *Description of the Joyous Entry* (1642) is a good example of this (see plate 28). For Ravenstyen, Andromeda, encircled by some rather transparent cloth, is vulnerable and impassive as Perseus approaches to save her. In Rembrandt's treatment of this subject (1620), he depicts only Andromeda and the rocks. Lescailje, on the other hand, focused the audience on a restored Andromeda, bringing honor to a heroic Perseus.

Lescailje not only shied away from images that emphasized female vulnerability, she also employed the Dutch equivalents of violation (*schenden*) and rape (*verkrachten*) almost exclusively to refer to violence done to men. For instance, in her poem, "Peace Between the King of Great Britain and the States of the Unified Netherlands" (1674), she described the "horrible cruelties and destruction" and the "greedy consumption

of brotherly blood." The soldiers tremble when they see "the violations of fires, black smoke, that transpired during the horrific sea battle . . ."[91] Rather than depict the war between England and the Dutch Republic as a violent male attack on a female victim, Lescailje described it as fratricide. In another instance in which we encounter the mention of violation in her political poetry, she employed this term to criticize the murder of Cornelis de Witt on August 20, 1672. She wrote: "Violated all too soon, lamented, bewailed too late."[92] In her poem "The Suppressed Freedom of Amsteldam" (1672) in the guise of "Freedom," Lescailje bravely chastised William III and Holland for the murders of the De Witt brothers. While Holland bears the brunt of Lescailje's attack, Freedom grumbles: "Holland appears to recognize me the least, Blinded by selfishness, Violating Possessions and privileges . . . I long watched with bloodied eyes, where I was scandalously raped . . ."[93] Lescailje used these terms of physical violation only when describing military destruction, political assassinations, and the notion of freedom.

There is one exception to Lescailje's reticence to draw attention to instances of female vulnerability, which appears in her poem on the marriage of her dearest friend, Sara de Canjoncle. According to Dutch literary scholar, Lia van Gemert, this poem is unusual because it expresses Lescailje's intense jealousy at losing her close companion, and perhaps lover. In fact, quite contrary to convention, Lescailje criticizes both the bride and groom. In her paraphrase of this poem, Gemert explains that Lescailje aimed the most powerful invective at the groom: "With the help of the gods he *raped* (*'had verkracht'*) the proud bride and made her sad; he himself could do nothing but complain about his unrequited love for her and eventually De Canjoncle consented to be his servant."[94] Lescailje's bitterness is understandable. At the very least Lescailje interpreted

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[91] "Het stompgeschaarde krygszwaard, zat/ Van 't vroederlyke bloed te zwelgen, En gruwzaam woeden en verdelgen, Schynt nu van stryden afgemat: et schrikt en beeft zelfs voor het schenden, Met branden blaaken, aangerecht/ In 't gruwelyke zeegevecht, Op moordtooneelen van elenden . . ." Lescailje, "Vreêverbond Tusschen den Koning van Grootbrittanje, en de Staaten der Vereenigde Nederlanden," *De Mengelpoëzy*, I, 17–18.

[92] "Geschonden al te vroeg, beklaagd, beschreid te laat." Lescailje, "Op de Heere Mr. Cornelis de Wit, Burgermeester der Stad Dordrecht, Ruwaard van Putten, enz.," *De Mengelpoëzy*, I, 29.

[93] "Holland schynt my minst te kennen, Meest verblind door eigenbaat. Haave en privilegie schennen . . . Zag ik lang met bloedige oogen, Daar ik schandelyk verkracht . . ." Lescailje, "De Verdrukte Vryheid aan Amsteldam," *De Mengelpoëzy*, I, 38.

[94] Van Gemert, "Hiding Behind Words," 32.

De Canjoncle's marriage as the death of a very dear literary companion, considering how few women continued to write after marriage. If indeed Lescailje had been invested in a romantic friendship with De Canjoncle, then she experienced this loss even more acutely.[95] Either way, it is likely that Lescailje could not imagine her dear friend as the author of her pain and so made a rare exception by highlighting De Canjoncle's vulnerability and holding her husband responsible for her actions.

Concluding Ideas

The seventeenth-century women's works examined here support the assessment that women "see with two minds," insofar as the writers offered both their own subversive analyses and accepted patriarchal interpretations.[96] These women were unable to challenge the social hierarchy in which men were ranked higher than women. In fact, most fully supported a Calvinist morality in which men were superior and women had to exercise constant vigilance to avoid falling prey to temptation due to the weakness of female flesh. And yet even as they reinforced ideas about women's inferiority, they simultaneously undermined some of the most harmful myths about rape.

These women's writings argued for a different understanding of rape than those expressed in the male-authored texts examined in earlier chapters. While some male authors agreed that rape was a horrific, painful ordeal, it was the women writers scrutinized here who held men responsible for violating women's sexual honor whether it was through the application of threats, brute strength, or false promises. In fact, two of the literary women who offered these challenges directly argued with the learned men who supported their literary efforts: Coomans' refuted Cats' emblem in which he held women entirely responsible for preventing rape and Brongersma rejected Smids' examples of Dido and Lucretia as relevant models for contemporaneous women.

Their emphasis on male responsibility for sexual corruption allowed women writers to rehabilitate the image of a larger group of women. Although women authors agreed that individual women who were idle were likely to be vain and corrupt, they contended that education and

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[95] Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Morrow, 1981).

[96] See Wolfthal, 4.

learned pursuits made women more chaste, moral, and industrious. These chaste, learned women then provided the necessary instruction to transform men into gentlemen, they guarded against religious corruption, and offered their patriotic services to the Dutch state.

In addition, several women wrote political poetry that depicted the vulnerable nation quite differently from those of patriotic male authors. Women did not highlight female vulnerability or rape in their patriotic works, but used different metaphors in which the vulnerable nation was an endangered child, sheep, or lion. These alternative metaphors are informative insofar as they claim a common humanity for both men and women. Rather than portray their sex as uniquely helpless and weak, female authors employed the image of a defenseless child to argue that neither adult men nor women are strong enough to survive without the help of God. The images of powerless sheep or lions function in the same way to demonstrate that humans, whether male or female, must rely on God for protection. Questiers, whose play reopened the Amsterdam Theater and commenced this chapter, appropriated that most powerful of all symbols for women: Octavia is a lion, who forgives her enemy, the faithless Fulvius, as he lies upon the ground before her.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This study commenced with a discussion regarding the different ways outsiders have imagined the Dutch in order to suggest the wide range of possibilities available in the fabrication of group identity. While cultivating a reputation for toleration during the seventeenth century, the inhabitants of the new Dutch Republic would not have found anything familiar about the modern stereotype of the Dutch as a people living in a hedonistic playground of legally tolerated prostitution and marijuana. And although they might recognize the more durable caricature of the Dutch as a sober, industrious people adept at producing cheese, growing tulips, and engaging in international trade, this conception has little power to inspire impassioned feelings of patriotism. In spite of countless options available to them, many authors and artists of the Dutch Golden Age crafted depictions of rape to make particular claims about their state, their society, their religion, and themselves. The goal of this book has been to illuminate some of the ways in which rape served social, political, and religious goals while simultaneously suggesting how ideas about rape impacted individual men and women.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, the concept of rape mobilized a nascent Dutch national identity by obscuring the finer points of regional and religious differences. By casting the Revolt as a stark contrast of good versus evil, it inspired a vehement revulsion of the Spanish and an intense patriotic pride. At the same time, depictions of rape galvanized the social hierarchy and put force behind Reformed lessons of social subservience. Rape, however, did not only serve the interests of those in power; in a trend that intensified after mid-century, marginalized groups also deployed it to challenge Protestant ideals and to improve gender relations.

Depictions of Rape and Patriotic Dutch Identity

Seventeenth-century depictions of rape were contradictory. Some of the most popular authors at the height of the Dutch Golden Age described it as either a serious crime or a natural expression of male sexuality. Foremost Dutch playwright, Joost van den Vondel, emphasized the injustice of

rape by focusing his audience's attention on raped women's bodies and anguish in his patriotic play, *Gijsbrecht van Amstel* (1638). This strategy follows the model of author and statesman, P.C. Hooft, who equated acts of rape and tyranny in his earlier play, *Geeraerdt van Velzen* (1613). For both, rape was a crime against a woman and her family, but also—when perpetrated by an outsider—it was a violation of the rights of a community and a disturbance of communal order. By focusing on the violation of Dutch women and the violation of maidens representing the Dutch nation and religious institutions, Vondel forced his audiences to contemplate the late sixteenth-century Spanish desecration of married women, family bonds, religious sanctity, and Dutch sovereignty in order to incite an abhorrence of Spain in the seventeenth century. In so doing, he also created an ideal image of the Dutch male citizen. The beautiful and vulnerable Hollands Maid, who symbolized the nation, required a male citizenry to both love and protect her as they would their own wives. Rape was a theme that not only allowed men to imagine an intimate connection to an otherwise abstract state, but also one that created a bond between the Dutch husbands and fathers, who could take pride in their ability to protect Dutch women from sexual attack and the entire Dutch nation from the Spanish.

In order to encourage his audience to forgive certain rapists, popular Protestant moralist and bureaucrat, Cats, shifted the focus to the vulnerable male body driven by desire and difficult to control. He depicted wealthy rapists as overly eager lovers, who were subject to their naturally aggressive male sexuality. At the same time that Cats recast male rapists as the victims of rape, he literally deleted the image of damaged female bodies, transforming the act of rape into feasting, hunting, or picking flowers. Consequently, he reinforced the idea that women's bodies were vulnerable, but simultaneously obscured the damage to women engendered through rape. His failure to recognize the bodily impact of rape allowed him to argue that women were quick to forget it and became happy once they had married their rapists. In this way, Cats empowered wealthy men to rape unmarried women, while also encouraging the prosecution of poor men, aggressive women, and minor sons and daughters who married without the consent of their parents. When perpetrated by wealthy Dutch citizens eligible for marriage, rape and abduction were not crimes; in Cats' estimation they were simply additional ways in which one could take a wife.

In spite of the different ways rape functioned in the works of Vondel and Cats, both authors agreed that women were necessary sacrifices in the

creation and preservation of the Dutch nation. When Vondel's model, poet and playwright P.C. Hooft followed Livy's lead in predicating the foundation of a new republic on the revulsion of a raping tyrant, it was Lucretia's literary descendant, Machteld, whose traumatic rape he employed to incite a male drive for retribution. Similarly, when Vondel adopted Virgil's *Aeneid* as a model, he highlighted the rape and murder of the nuns, who "play[ed] Cassandra's part," in order to evoke antipathy for the Spanish for the rape of Netherlandish women and territory perpetrated by the Army of Flanders during the Eighty Years' War. Cats also employed depictions of rape to emphasize the value of women's sacrifices for the nation. So long as a rapist was both wealthy and eligible for marriage, Cats expected a woman to acquiesce to marry him for the good of the nation. He taught women to sacrifice their own will by allying their families with those of powerful patriarchs instead of charging these men with rape and thereby threatening the men with capital punishment and their families with humiliation and ruin. For Vondel and Cats and many of the other authors whose work inspired them, women's bodies, both literally and symbolically, were ideal sacrifices for the nascent Dutch state. Vulnerable women's bodies provided the motivation for powerful alliances, bonds between a Dutch male citizenry that had to both love and protect Dutch women and the Dutch nation figured as female, and the means to vilify enemies, especially Spain.

The reason why authors such as Vondel and Cats found rape to be a vital tool in the construction of Dutch identity was that it allowed them to make a competitive claim to a higher moral standard. To inspire pride in a Dutch character and in their new nation, seventeenth-century male authors defined themselves as more principled than their contemporary competitors, whether the Spanish or other vilified out-groups such as poor men and women hoping to marry above their station, or women acting on sexual desire. Casting these opponents as rapists was an ideal way to claim moral superiority, while simultaneously igniting a sense of disgust, a desire for retribution, and ultimately a feeling of pride in overcoming evil. All of these passions promoted the sense that the Dutch people had collectively weathered intense torment, survived as a more cohesive unit, and were following a God-ordained path to prosperity.

Implications for Dutch Women

Although the seventeenth-century authors examined here constructed rape in a number of ways that were unfavorable to women, there is no

consensus that they blamed the victims of rape, or that they held women solely responsible for rape prevention. Of the authors examined here, Dutch Humanists—both male and female—were the least suspicious that raped women had consented, these authors emphasized the pain of rape, and they suggested ways to avenge this crime. Catholic priests offered ambiguous advice that had the potential to both empower and debilitate. Early Reformers and Dutch Pietists rebuked rapists for their sinful actions. With the exception of Zeeland minister, Godefriedus Udemans, who contended that Dinah and the women of Shiloh had made themselves susceptible to rape by dancing, these men held the rapists and the women's parents responsible for preventing rape. Remarkably, Cats' advice, although influenced by both Humanism and Pietism, stands out as having had the greatest potential to do harm.

The goal of Cats' advice was to encourage women to accept their subordinate status, and not to create a dangerous discourse that perpetuated rape. In fact, his advice books signaled a desire to ameliorate the impact of rape on innocent women and endow the position of wife and mother with honor. In addition, his expanded definition of rape that allowed parents to dispute their children's marriages might have enabled a few married mothers to exercise greater control over the younger generation. However, his teachings perpetuated a host of dangerous rape myths. He depicted rape as nontraumatic for women, contended that women's beauty and words initiated rape, expressed disgust at the idea that a woman might articulate her own sexual desire (even to a suitor), and argued that a woman who went outside demonstrated her sexual availability. In other words, Cats instructed his audience that rape is not so bad, that men cannot help themselves, and that women say no when they mean yes.

Cats was not alone in arguing that women's bodies instigated rape in a literal sense. Both he and Lumnius, a Jesuit, believed that women's bodies attracted men just as magnets attracted iron.[1] These authors characterized this attraction as being against the will of the men. This formed the basis of Cats' belief that women raped men. For Lumnius, this was an indication that both women and men were extremely susceptible to sexual temptation—especially temptation instigated by sexual contact. Because of women's power over men, Cats and many Catholic priests held women responsible for controlling their own desires as well as limiting men's opportunities to desire them. These men advised women

[1] Lumnius, 225 and Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, II, 83.

that to prevent rape, it was their responsibility to avoid men by staying at home.

Three religious authors, Cats, Lumnius, and Cornelius Musius, a sixteenth-century Catholic, whose Latin book was translated into Dutch in 1690, made the most devastating claim that there were, in fact, no rape victims. They claimed that women suffered from internal corruption long before they were raped. When women dressed alluringly, left their homes, and talked to men, they indicated that they were, in common parlance, "asking for it." Women who acted this way demonstrated their willingness, not for a particular man, but for any man. These three authors contended that such women invited their own sexual violation and that rape was the result of the woman having corrupted herself.[2]

Although only expressed by three authors, these claims that women's beauty and internal corruption incited rape clarifies why women's accusations of rape were frequently met with suspicion. Most of the Catholic authors who wrote works for the Spiritual Virgins implicitly blamed rape victims by suggesting they did not fully protect men from their beautiful faces and bodies. Religious women had to keep themselves covered and out of sight, make themselves unattractive to men by disfiguring their faces through the application of poisonous herbs or cutting off their noses, and to even contemplate suicide. Although priestly advice frequently pointed out that suicide was a sin, Willhelm Schoenius' explanation left open the possibility that the Holy Spirit might direct a religious woman, whose purity was threatened, to kill herself. The long list of activities priests compiled to help religious women, encouraged these women to fear their own bodies, mistrust their intentions, and engage in self-destructive behaviors in the service of others, but conversely, they also empowered these women to protect themselves through active means.

In spite of the opinions voiced by Cats and Catholic priests that women incite rape and thus are responsible for preventing it, the early modern reformulations of the biblical stories of Tamar and Dinah reveal several authors who did not blame the victims. For instance, three of the four religious authors who discussed Tamar's rape, namely the extremely influential Jean Calvin, early Pietist Jean Taffin, and even Cats heaped blame upon her brother Amnon and her father King David. Two Catholic priests, Valentinus Bisschop and Schoenius implied that Tamar was somewhat to blame because her example demonstrated the religious women's need

[2] See Cats, *Alle de Wercken*, I, 251 and Musius, 11.

to avoid all men, including family members. Far more religious authors emphasized Dinah's culpability; Cats, Bisschop, Willibrord Kemp, and one additional anonymous Catholic author all held Dinah responsible because she had left her home. Calvin and Taffin directed the blame at her male family members, specifically her father.

As for the two classical rape victims, Helen and Lucretia, no single Dutch author examined in this study doubted either woman's innocence. For Helen in particular, who had had a long tarnished reputation as an adulterous, seductive accomplice to her own abduction, this was unique.[3] The Dutch poets and playwrights, Vondel, Anna Roemers Visscher, Johanna Hoobius, and Katharina Lescailje all held Paris solely accountable for abducting Helen. Vondel, moreover, equated Helen with Machteld, the raped noble wife whose purity was never questioned in his play *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*. The willingness of Dutch Humanists to rehabilitate the ambiguous tradition of Helen suggests a much less suspicious attitude toward certain women.

Historically, Lucretia had enjoyed a much better reputation than Helen so it is less surprising that Dutch authors emphasized her chastity and honor. However, Dutch authors followed the opinion of Saint Augustine that Lucretia was not a good model for contemporary Christian women because they viewed suicide as immoral and unnecessary since God is a witness to a woman's refusal to consent. Catholic priest Johannes Fredericus Lumnius argued that Lucretia killed herself out of weakness because she did not want to live in shame. Hooft's rape victim, Machteld, who stands in for Lucretia in his play, likens herself to her Roman predecessor as she wishes for death, but affirms that suicide is unacceptable for Christians. Moreover, her husband Geeraerdt never doubts her innocence and sweetly supports her as she grieves.

Several Humanist authors rejected Lucretia's example in order to offer contemporary women more empowering responses to rape. Hooft's Machteld exercises mercy by begging her husband to allow the courts to deal with her rapist justly; however, in spite of her pleas, Geeraerdt and his allies murder the rapist. Titia Brongersma dismissed Lucretia's example as offensively weak. She provided a vastly different model in Lione, a woman who kills the man who violates her honor. Brongersma's contention was that women should avenge themselves. Her literary companion and fellow Groninger, Ludolph Smids, answered her poem with the argument

[3] Maguire, 104.

that rape should not go unpunished, but that raped women should allow male family members to avenge them. Among these examples, Cats is the only one who contended that women should follow the model of the Sabines rather than Lucretia—in other words, that women should marry their rapists.

In addition to the generally positive assessments of the innocence of Tamar, Helen, and Lucretia, it is noteworthy that Hooft's and Vondel's raped characters were not solely important as symbols of political violation. While rape served political ends in their plays, both authors also emphasized the pain women experienced as victims of rape. Both Hooft and Vondel provided Machteld with an extensive opportunity to express her anguish. In an exceedingly rare move in the history of the theater, Vondel also bravely directed his audiences' attention to the physical and emotional torment of the act itself by narrating the gruesome details of Claris' rape. These two renowned Humanists were not alone in recognizing the pain rape inflicted upon women; even Lumnius implicitly highlighted the fact that women suffered by claiming a double martyrdom for Spiritual Virgins who remained pure despite rape.

The early modern assessment of the oft-repeated stories of Tamar, Dinah, Helen, and Lucretia sheds light on their authors' propensity to view raped women as innocent or culpable. The Humanists under consideration here thought these women worthy of respect and sympathy. With the exception of Cats, these authors depicted raped women as believable, justly angry, grieving, and deserving of support and justice. The religious assessment of raped women was much more ambiguous. Catholic priests made widely discordant claims, including one that stated that women could reap spiritual benefit from the suffering of rape if they withheld their consent, but that to do so would be more difficult than not burning in the midst of a fire. Cats' multidimensional attempt to undermine women's accusations of rape as inappropriate or impossible (at least when directed at men of the middle and upper classes) is particularly remarkable considering the fact that most of his Pietist influences deemed rape a serious sin that all men must work to prevent.

Even though these authors' depictions of rape expressed a great deal of ambiguity, their belief in the power of women's beauty and lustiness, that men's sexuality was naturally aggressive, and that women were complementarily passive, intertwined to provide rapists with the means to evade blame. This does not mean that Dutch women heeded the religious advice that they should stay home. Up to approximately 65 percent of Dutch women had to work outside their homes, and those women who did have

the means to work at home did not necessarily adhere to the restrictive advice either. Nevertheless, this discourse did impact women's behavior and their interpretation of their own complicity in cases of rape. The persistent threat of rape limited women's mobility and altered feminine comportment.[4] Moreover, the social attitudes that blamed raped women for not doing enough to prevent their rape coupled with seventeenth-century Dutch moral advice that expected women to take charge of policing their own conduct meant that rape victims likely blamed themselves.

Ending Rape

Many contemporary theorists searching for a way to bring an end to rape advise women to violently fight back using self-defense training, and, in the longer term, to subvert the social construction of the feminine as weak and vulnerable.[5] Notably, this is the same logic employed by some of the seventeenth-century priests and literary women featured in this book. Catholic priests, who needed the help of devout women to maintain a Catholic presence in the Dutch Republic, advised them to fight back violently and kill attackers and they provided many examples of women who successfully put this advice into practice. Priests empowered these religious Catholic women to protect themselves from sexual temptation and to actively stop others from engaging in immoral sex like Agnes of Heilsbach who punched men in the face and pulled out their hair. Spiritual Virgins embraced these responsibilities as opportunities to save themselves, their families, their neighbors, and their Catholic faith.

Educated women also advocated vehement responses to rape and to other forms of male sexual misbehavior. Most striking is Brongerma's Lione, who dresses as a man and—in a move analogous to rape—impales her violator with a sword. Like Lione, Questiers depicted a strong female protagonist named Octavia as a powerful lioness. This confident, formidable woman does not consider suicide, but rather, the man who violated her honor threatens to stab himself in order to obtain her forgiveness. Both Brongersma's and Questiers' works insinuate that contrary to Lucretia's

[4] Cahill, 158–161.

[5] Sharon Marcus, "Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention," in *Gender Struggles: Practical Approaches to Contemporary Feminism*, ed. Constance L. Mui and Julien S. Murphy (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2002); Heberle, 63–76; Cahill, 198–207. Also see Heberle for the problems in emphasizing women's need for self-defense training.

example, violence is best directed at the men responsible for sexual dishonor. Literate women also rejected the reiteration of female vulnerability in their political poetry. The Visscher sisters, Anna and Maria Tesselschade, and Katharina Lescailje depicted the imperiled state, not as a woman, but as a weak animal or as a helpless child, and conversely, the victorious city as a militant female protector.

Other women employed a superior strategy: rather than assigning victims more responsibility in preventing rape by requiring them to react violently, they advocated the reeducation of men to find fault in sexual aggression, deceptive seduction, and false promises of marriage. Learned Dutch women designated themselves as the educators in this campaign to undermine socialized male aggression. These women disrupted the long tradition of men who wrote moral advice for women, by presenting themselves as capable teachers of moral behavior. Not only did women teach men how they should treat women, but they also depicted women as guardians of the public church, role models of Christian civility for wayward men, and patriotic supporters of the Dutch state. This approach advocated a way to eradicate rape through a creation of a common ground of human civility situated between the extremes of men's socialized aggression and women's socialized passivity. These women's works promoted the idea that men should respect women and honor the promises they made during courtship and they offered women some say in directing romantic relationships.

Although this tactic commendably placed responsibility for social change on the sex that most disproportionately provided the perpetrators of rape, it had one major limitation. Unfortunately, the only women who qualified as instructors on proper behavior were the well-to-do, literate women who claimed this position. They depicted themselves as chaste, industrious, and intelligent, but did nothing to improve the image of poorer, single, working women. And, as we have seen, it was primarily the latter group who needed protection from rape. These poor maidservants, seamstresses, spinners, combers, lace makers, peddlers, and many others had no money to prosecute a case as, being both poor and female, they were doubly disadvantaged before the law that privileged the wealthy and believed the testimony of men. They had no powerful friends to take their side, and no one to believe that they were not available to all men just by virtue of their poor status and their need to work outside the home.

Although imperfect and interesting in their own right, the ways that these men and women contested ideas about rape in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic can be instructive in charting a course to eliminate

rape today. Feminists have argued that many modern societies continue to construe male sexual aggression and women's sexual passivity as natural, thereby assuming a sexual encounter in which a man forces himself upon a woman to be the norm.[6] To challenge the continued existence of rape, we must follow the lead of seventeenth-century Dutch literary women, who advocated the reeducation of men to accept culpability for rape and reject aggressive sexual acts, as well as the reeducation of women to refuse the construction of femininity as weak, passive, and inevitably rapeable. Considering these women's failure to end rape, however, we must ultimately extend our demands to insist that all women have the same legal, economic, and social privileges as men.[7]

[6] See Robin E. Field, "Rape Culture," in *Encyclopedia of Rape*, ed. Merril D. Smith (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2004), 174–5. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*. Cahill, *Rethinking Rape*.

[7] Feminist critics believe that rape culture will flourish as long as women do not have the same legal, economic, and social privileges as men. In turn, rape cultures will continue to legitimatize rape and sexual violence as normal expressions of male sexuality, and more women and children will be victimized as a result. Smith, 174–5. For practical advice on how to combat violence against women see Julia T. Woods, *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture* (Toronto: Wadsworth, 2005), 258–254.

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